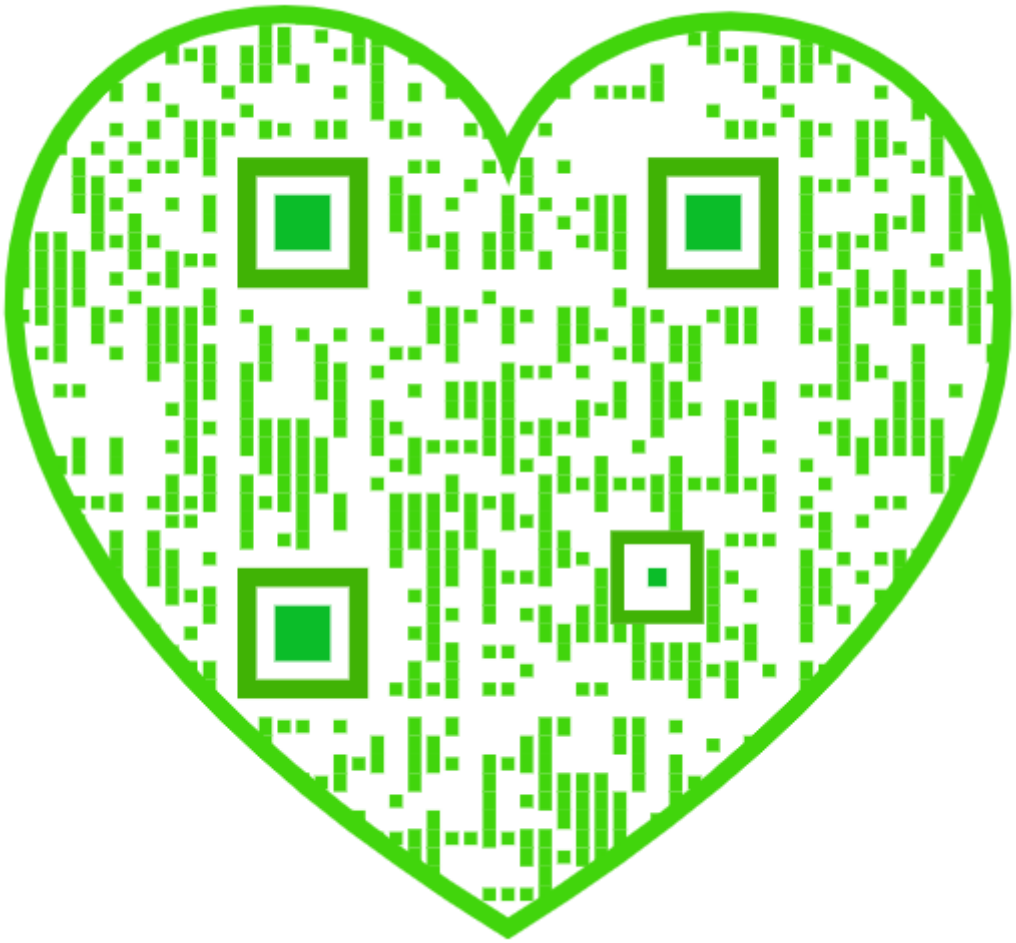

# SIXTY YEARS OF JOURNALISM.

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# Sixty Years of Journalism

## Anecdotes and Reminiscences

By
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# PREFACE.

THE following pages deal with matters with which the writer has been associated during the sixty years he has spent in journalistic work. In placing before the reader a selection of notable and interesting events, in which many eminent men—including some of our leading statesmen and ablest lawyers—have taken part, together with numerous anecdotes which have hitherto escaped publication, it is not intended to offer anything like a history of the Press during the long and eventful period dealt with, but rather to present in a new light a series of occurrences that have in their day been subjects of public recognition and journalistic record. Those who peruse these memoirs may be satisfied with the assurance that whatsoever is herein set down may be accepted as veritable chronicles of incidents and proceedings with which, for the most part, the writer has been personally connected.

# Sixty Years of Journalism.

## JOURNALISM SIXTY YEARS AGO: A COMPARISON.

WHAT may be termed my apprenticeship to journalism began in the year 1844 at the unusually early age of 13, and from that time, until very recently, when I bade a lasting adieu to press-work, I was continually employed on newspapers in different parts of the kingdom, in the varying capacities of reporter, sub-editor, and editor. My father, an author and journalist of some repute, was, at the period of my initiation into journalistic surroundings, editing a weekly paper in the North of England—*The Preston Chronicle*—and with a view of lightening his own labours, which included most of the reporting for the town and district, he taught me his system of shorthand and entrusted to my then unskilled hands much of the minor work he had hitherto been performing. Thus I speedily became familiar

with the business transacted at police courts and quarter sessions, the summarising of local meetings and lectures, the collection of paragraphs, the grim details of coroner's inquests, and, when not engaged outside, the reading of proofs, the marks for which I remember learning from a page of *Knight's Penny Magazine.*

Here I may draw attention to the vast difference existing between the newspapers of that day and the journals of the twentieth century.

In 1844 there was not a penny paper in the kingdom, to say nothing of the halfpenny Press which has latterly sprung up in most of our larger towns, the reason being that then, and for many years subsequently, a tax of one penny, in the form of a red Government stamp, had to be impressed on every copy issued from a newspaper office. Not only did the stamp tax render the publication of a penny newspaper impossible, but other and heavier charges were inflicted by the then Government on the Press of this country, which, like spirits and tobacco, seemed to be made the special object of attack by successive Chancellors of the Exchequer. At that time paper of all kinds, whether for clerical purposes, books

and magazines, or commercial and trade wraps, was made from rags, the finer sorts being manufactured from white linen, while the coarser descriptions owed their origin to cloths of inferior quality. Good writing-paper was then very dear, while the material in use for the production of ordinary newspapers cost about eight times as much as is paid for it at the present day. This enormous disparity in the prices of then and now was due, in the first place, to the cost of the raw material, the business of rag-dealing being highly remunerative and the source of numerous fortunes; and, in the second place, to the heavy duty imposed by the Government on paper production, an oppressive tax, giving colour to the charge constantly levelled at the State authorities, that their object was to prevent the spread of education among the people of Great Britain. In fact, so serious was the charge for this commodity, even down to the first decade of the last half-century, that while editing and managing the *Sunderland Times* and *Shields Advocate*, in the year 1856, having occasion to make a change in the existing arrangement for the supply of paper, I entered into a contract with a paper manufacturer, for the quantity we

then consumed in our two issues, at sevenpence-halfpenny per pound.

About that time the proprietors of *The Times* were offering a prize of £500 for the discovery of a cheap fibrous material for the manufacture of a serviceable description of paper, capable of being used for newspaper purposes, and not very long afterwards a substitute was found in Esparto grass and straw, until at length it was discovered that wood pulp was capable of supplanting both these materials, and of yielding quantities, so enormous that, notwithstanding the thousands of tons thus daily procured from European and American forests, there need be little fear either of dearth in the supply or even a decimation of the primeval woods, for countless centuries. Indeed, but for the means which modern science has placed at the disposal of the paper manufacturer, it would be impossible at the present day to meet anything like the demand from all civilised countries for newspapers, books and magazines, as the mere supply of rags could not have kept pace with the wants of the reading public, while any limitation in the output of our paper manufacturers must necessarily have meant a proportionate rise in price.

In addition to the stamp duty and the heavy paper duty formerly inflicted on the newspaper proprietary and the public, there was another Government charge—an advertisement tax—of an exceptionally severe and oppressive character, not only as keeping down the legitimate profits of news caterers in those days, but also as a means of preventing different sections of the community from making known what they had to dispose of, or the wants they desired to supply, while, in the case of those out of employment, or in need of assistants to fill vacant places, the tax was especially heavy, because it was a serious addition to the price the advertiser had to pay the newspaper proprietor. In this case the tax was a duty of one shilling and sixpence on every advertisement appearing in a newspaper, and, combined with the other duties inflicted on the Press of that period, it helped to make a burden such as was borne by no other interest in the kingdom. As a notable instance of the way in which this multiple system of taxation pressed upon those who provided news for the people, it may be stated that on one occasion, when the then proprietor of *The Times*, Mr. Walter, was giving evidence before a parliamentary

committee, appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the whole question of the taxes imposed upon knowledge, he stated that in the case of his newspaper—then having the largest circulation in the kingdom—the three duties paid by that single property to the Exchequer amounted to something like £180,000 per annum, an astounding charge upon one particular unit in a somewhat extensive industry.

In the days of which I am now writing the whole of the provincial newspapers, not one-twentieth of the number, nor one-fiftieth of the circulation of the journals now available to the public, were weekly publications, there being no daily papers outside the metropolis. The price of these issues was, generally speaking, fourpence-halfpenny, though many were sold at sixpence; but when the penny stamp was abolished, and when, afterwards, the other duties were remitted, daily newspapers sprang into existence, like mushrooms, all over the country, while most of the London papers increased their circulation, especially when they subsequently reduced their prices, by "leaps and bounds." The removal of the heavy tax on advertisements was an

undoubted boon to the public at large, especially to the serving class, for as things are now even the poorest individual can afford to advertise for a place when out of employment, the columns of "Want places" and "Situations vacant" now seen in our daily and weekly papers having no existence while the advertisement duty prevailed.

In the forties the means of producing newspapers were, as compared with those of the present day, of a very primitive type. None of the elaborate and costly machines, such as are now in use on every daily paper, were then even invented, although some of the greater journals, notably *The Times*, had made considerable advance in their machinery, and could turn out their issues at what was regarded as an adequate rate, there being at that time no early paper trains to catch, whereby, as is now the case, the whole country is flooded by breakfast-time with news from every part of the world—east, west, north and south—received as late as half-past two o'clock in the morning, and whirled away to all points of the compass at five o'clock by trains specially provided for the purpose, and travelling along their several lines

at express speed. Although the London papers, and many of the principal provincial journals, were printed by steam, the bulk of the country newspapers in the smaller towns, having as a rule but slender circulations, were worked by hand, on machines mostly of the old Napier type, while in some cases even the ancient Columbian plattens, surmounted, as I well remember, by a cast-iron eagle, had in certain places to do the laborious duty of turning out the entire issue.

In the Napier and the Columbian processes the papers had to be submitted to a double operation, as only one side was printed at a time. The work on the platen was performed by an up-and-down lever motion, which brought a flat iron slab on the paper which took the inked impression from the type below. The Napier machine, which was a marked improvement on that of the platen press, produced the necessary result by a continuous rolling action, effected by a cylinder moving over the surface of the type. Now, on the huge machines which not only print the paper on both sides, but have an apparatus folding them ready for delivery to the paper agents, after having, by another process, pasted

in such extra pages as the pressure of news and advertisements may necessitate, many thousands of copies are turned out every hour, and as fast as the country editions are completed they are driven off by special carts to the numerous railway stations, whence they are despatched to their several destinations.

Even in the composing department the setting of type by machinery has to a considerable extent replaced the slower, but so far surer, method of composition by hand. In the case of the Linotype machine, each line is set and cast in a solid piece, the disadvantage of this process being that if a correction be needed in either of the lines, the turned letter, misplaced point, or wrongly-spelt word can only be put right by a recast of the faulty line, and in cases where what the printers term "over-running" occurs, when a word or two have been omitted or additional words are necessary, the recasting process may be extended some distance down the column, thereby causing a good deal of delay.

As to the facilities for obtaining news from distant places, both at home and abroad—especially the latter—there can be no comparison between the means

now available and those of sixty years ago. In the early forties the electric telegraph was rarely used by the newspapers, although it was then in existence on some of the railways, where it was practically confined to the service of the companies who had set up the wires. One of the first bits of sensational news conveyed to London by telegraph was the arrest of John Tawell, a Quaker, who had poisoned his mistress while dining with her at an inn in Aylesbury, and had taken train to Liverpool, with the view of evading justice by fleeing thence to America. A description of the man was telegraphed to the great shipping port, and on his arrival at Liverpool Mr. Tawell found the police awaiting him. Although this was before I became a journalist, it has, I think, a sufficient connection with the subject of early Press telegraphy to justify its introduction here. I may add that Tawell was tried, convicted, and hanged—the first member of the Society of Friends ever executed in England. I remember reading, in one of the magazines, an article on the uses to be anticipated from the electric system of conveying instantaneous messages, and it began with the

remark attributed to a traveller on the London and North Western Railway, who was scanning the telegraph wires as the train speeded northwards, "Them's the cords that hung John Tawell."

In the forties telegraphy was far too costly for constant use by the Press, and, moreover, it was only in what I may term its "teething" stage, a lengthy message being then very slow as compared with what is achieved nowadays, and it being impossible to receive the same evening a verbatim report, such as now comes nightly, of a speech by some prominent public man, or an account of some important event, such as regularly meets the eye when the messenger has delivered the morning paper. Beyond this, an electric cable that would flash the news of the Western world from New York to London in a few seconds, or a series of connected wires stretching across the Eastern continent and the far-away Indian and Pacific Oceans, had never entered the brain of the scientific electrician; consequently the people of the two hemispheres had to rest content with the news brought by the few and slow-going Atlantic steamers, or the still slower sailing vessels trading to and from

the distant East, all of which, as there was then no Suez Canal, had to make the circuitous passage of the Cape. Now, however, some of the great metropolitan journals have the special use of the Channel cables, whereby their offices in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and other European capitals are in constant communication with each other, and are able on the instant, through their special correspondents, to collect and telegraph every item of news to which the least importance is attached. Thus the latest developments in the Russo-Japanese War, the newest indications regarding the forthcoming presidential election in the United States, the visits, journeys, and speeches of emperors and kings, the casualties that constantly happen on sea and land, and the score of other things in which the slightest public interest is felt are duly recorded in the morning and evening editions of our newspapers, whose readers, like the prince in the *Arabian Nights*, have only to wish for a sight of what is going on in any part of the world to find their desire abundantly gratified. The newspaper reader of the present day has much to be thankful for, as compared with the state of things in

which his forefathers' existence was cast; and now that wireless telegraphy is making itself a factor in the spread of information throughout the world, it is not unlikely that the day will soon arrive when some of the most enterprising and wealthy of our newspaper proprietors will have their own wireless telegraphic stations constructed, so as to obtain independent and exclusive information from the most distant points to which the wireless system may be found capable of extension.

## SOME EARLY EXPERIENCES.

Such, in the brief sketch I have given, having been the condition of matters relating to the newspaper world about the time I began my journalistic career, I now proceed to put together such of my Press reminiscences as I think may prove of interest to the reader. The earliest event I can remember in connection with politics is an election that took place in Preston, where a fierce contest was going on between the supporters of two rival candidates—Tory and Liberal—for the parliamentary representation of the borough. That

was notoriously a period of bribery, treating and general political corruption, party feeling on both sides running so high that frequent encounters took place when two opposing factions met. On one occasion a fight of the most vigorous and determined character took place in the widest part of the central thoroughfare, where men attached to each party, armed with bludgeons and heavy missiles which they tore from the street pavement, attacked each other with the greatest fury. A band which had been parading the town had its instruments seized and broken; the whole of the windows in the front portion of a large hotel were smashed, and considerable damage done to the furniture. Men and even women were to be seen rushing about with bleeding faces and torn clothing, till at length the rioting took so dangerous a form that the mayor found it necessary to read the Riot Act and call on the military, for whom he had just sent, to quell the disturbance. This they luckily succeeded in doing by advancing on the crowds with fixed bayonets, although it took some time to clear the streets. These were the "good old days," when scenes of this character were by no

means infrequent in most of the parliamentary boroughs of the country, stimulated to a large extent by the pretty general custom of throwing open, in cases of keen contests, public-houses and beer-shops, where the voters on both sides could obtain free liquor—an abuse that was usually winked at, because each party was generally tarred with the same brush.

Before I had been long accustomed to the use of notebook and pencil, I was sent to many of the less important meetings in and about the town and neighbourhood. Occasionally I was entrusted with the work of reporting an agricultural dinner in an outlying district, and I well remember what I regard as an amusing incident. At one of these dinners a mischievous gentleman, who edited the opposition paper, thought he would make merry at my expense, and, unknown to me, gave the chairman my name as the person to be called upon to respond to the toast of "The Press," then usually given at these gatherings. Imagine the astonishment of a boy, still a long way from the finish of his teens, when asked in a large company to reply to one of the evening's toasts. But

I had had the good fortune, on more than one occasion, to hear the same toast responded to by the humorous gentleman who served me this trick, and as he had a stereotyped set of phrases in laudation of his profession, some of which I could remember, I thought I would try to turn the wished-for laugh against himself. As I was not unnecessarily bashful — turn-down collar and short jacket notwithstanding — I began by regretting that my more experienced friend had not been charged with the duty of acknowledging the compliment paid to us, but I believed they were all aware, as he would have told them had he been called upon, that "the freedom of the Press is as the air we breathe; if we have it not, we die"; also that the newspaper was a "potent instrument in the education of the people"; further, that "while it strenuously upheld what was right and just, it exposed and reprobated the ways of the tyrant and oppressor," with a few more commonplace sentiments of the same kind. As most of those present had heard these astounding verities before, their repetition completely turned the tables in my favour, and when I sat down my

friend, who was seated near me, simply whispered, "You young rascal!"

### A STORM AT WHITEHAVEN.

My next engagement was in conjunction with my father on a Whitehaven paper, the *Cumberland Pacquet*. Here I made my first descent into a coal mine, called the Wellington Pit, and said at that time to be one of the deepest in the kingdom. This mine extended a considerable distance under the mouth of the Solway, and yielded a first-class quality of coal, which could then be carted to the householder's door at 5s. per ton. Although this is hardly a Press reminiscence, it suggests a sufficiently startling comparison between the prices realised in those days and the figures now appearing in newspaper advertisements. While here I remember witnessing, and afterwards describing, a somewhat thrilling spectacle. A fierce south-westerly gale had been blowing all day, and as night was advancing a foreign timber ship was seen to be running before the wind and endeavouring to make for the harbour; but owing to the peculiar position of the two piers

and the narrow entrance, the vessel was unable to take the necessary turn, and in a few minutes had drifted on the rocks beyond, where she was speedily crushed to pieces. She had, however, shaved the second pier so closely that, by a merciful act of Providence, the crew were all enabled to leap upon *terra firma*, and so were saved from what must otherwise have been inevitable death.

During my experience here I was present at the opening of the Whitehaven and Ravenglass Railway, a line which skirts the Cumberland coast, along one of the most picturesque portions of the kingdom. On one hand is the sea, with views in clear weather of the Isle of Man and the Kirkcudbright hills, which form the extreme promontory of the Solway embouchure; while on the other are the Cumberland mountains with their intervening valleys, the middle distance presenting a varied display of wood and plain.

### THE LATE BARON MARTIN.

I did not remain in Whitehaven very long, but during my stay I accepted a short engagement at the Cumberland

Assizes on the *Carlisle Journal*, being the guest of Mr. Steele, the proprietor. I only mention this circumstance in order to note a characteristic incident in the career of the late Baron Martin, who was then leader of the Northern Circuit. I was deputed to report the proceedings in the Nisi Prius Court, where an exceedingly important mining claim was expected to be tried. Baron, or as he then was Mr. Martin, Q.C., was for the defendant, and when, after a lengthy opening address, plaintiff's counsel, referring to the fact that there was a partnership among his clients, said: "I suppose, my lord, my learned friend admits the partnership?" Mr. Martin dryly replied: "My lord, I admit nothing." "Then, my lord," said plaintiff's counsel, "as I am unable to prove the partnership I must submit to a non-suit." Thus ended a case involving many thousands of pounds, and which was expected to have occupied the court for at least a week.

## LIVERPOOL AND BANGOR.

From Whitehaven I went to Liverpool, where my father had been engaged as editor of the *Albion*, and here I was

employed in a more absorbing kind of work than I had hitherto been accustomed to. I was occasionally sent to meet the American steamers on their arrival in the Mersey with a view to securing, at the earliest moment, copies of the New York and other American papers, for use in our next edition. This was not at all times a pleasant task, especially on a dark and stormy night; but it had to be performed, and I never knew a case in which either I or any of my confrères engaged on the same errand came to grief. Liverpool in those days was not to be compared with what it is now, either in population or extent, while Birkenhead was a comparatively insignificant place, and the line of docks then existent, though important and extensive, was infinitely less majestic and imposing than it has since become. The magnificent building known as St. George's Hall, which occupies the most commanding position in the city, was not then erected, and Sefton Park, one of the largest and finest in the North of England, had no existence as a recreation ground for the people. While located in this busy port I applied for and obtained, as I imagined, an engagement on a Bangor newspaper, and thither I repaired on a

steamboat which sailed between that place and the Mersey on alternate days. Considering the engagement secure, and not being too plentifully supplied with funds, I had only taken sufficient for my fare and enough, as I supposed, to tide me over a day or two until I got settled in my new berth. But soon after landing in the picturesque old city I had an interview with the proprietor of the paper I had hoped to adorn, when, to my intense digust, he not only refused to ratify the engagement because I had no knowledge of the Welsh language, about which he had given no previous hint, but also declined to reimburse the expenses of that fateful trip. As I had put up at the principal hotel, and must remain until I could catch the next day's boat, I spent part of the evening in the smoking-room, in which were a number of gentlemen, all of whom were conversing in the Welsh tongue. When, however, they heard me give an order in English and realised that they had a lonely stranger in their midst, they at once changed their conversation into English, which all were able to speak, an act of courtesy quite as acceptable as it was unexpected and unusual. Next morning when I asked for my bill I found

that its settlement, with the necessary tips, exhausted the whole of my available cash, and necessitated my going without breakfast. Making some excuse, I walked over the Menai Suspension Bridge and about the Isle of Anglesea till noon, when my boat was to start. There was a strong wind then blowing down the straits, and the steamer did not take its Beaumaris passengers on board till, in the attempt to fasten the vessel to the wooden pier it had torn half the timbers away, with the result that we had to be rowed into mid-stream in order to embark. Fortunately, with some regard to possibilities, I had obtained a return ticket, so that my passage to Liverpool was secure; but I shall never forget the hungry cravings induced by the long fast I was undergoing in the keen sea air, the boat not reaching Liverpool till seven o'clock in the evening.

### HERTFORD—A BARONET POLICE CONSTABLE.

From Liverpool I journeyed to Hertford, where, once more in company with my father, I did some uneventful work for the *Herts County Press*. The only incident

I need associate with this period is that, while reporting cases before the county magistrates, I made the acquaintance of a police sergeant who bore the title of a baronet; but, his patrimony having been squandered by his predecessors, he was reduced to the necessity of joining the police force, in which he had then risen to the position just named. I have not been able to trace his subsequent career, and as he was always offended by any allusion to his title, and as there may be a successor equally indisposed to have his baronetcy recognised, I purposely withhold his name.

## BRIGHTON FROM 1848 TO 1852.

From Hertford I went to Brighton, where I had obtained a situation as reporter on the *Guardian*. The "Queen of Watering Places," as Brighton was then generally termed, was a totally different place at that date from what it is now. There was only one pier—the old chain pier—which was destroyed a few winters ago by a furious gale, and the chief hotel was the "Bedford." The buildings on the west front ceased at Brunswick Square; there was no

elaborate promenade arrangement such as now exists; on the London road the country was visible soon after the level was passed, and Hove was a village which had to be reached by paths across the fields. The Pavilion had not been purchased by the local authority, which was then a Commission, the incorporation of the town not having then been dreamt of. The principal magnates were the High Constable and the Master of Ceremonies, the latter being consulted on occasions connected with the holding of balls, soirées and the like. The High Constable used to preside annually at a Court Leet, which exercised a certain jurisdiction in the Hundred of Brighthelmstone and Half Hundred of Dean. The court business was always followed by a banquet, at which, strange to say, the "loving cup" that went round, as part of the old custom, was filled with stout, instead of the spiced wines customary at dinners given by the Lord Mayor of London and other municipal dignitaries. The newspapers—*Gazette*, *Herald* and *Guardian*—were all weekly publications, and used to report local meetings and occurrences with an amount of detail that would not be tolerated in these go-ahead days.

The celebrated, I may say the notorious Brighton minority church rate case, was then in abeyance, awaiting the decision of the House of Lords in the equally notorious Braintree case.

I well remember attending, one Easter Monday, a vestry meeting at which the making of the rate was discussed. It was held in the body of the parish church, and lasted for several hours. A more disgraceful scene I have never witnessed in the interior of a sacred edifice. Except that there was no display of actual violence, it was an exhibition of the lowest ruffianism. Any attempt at argument on either side was met with derisive shouts and objurgatory remarks, pots of beer were brought in and consumed, short pipes were filled and smoked, and the whole procedure was more suggestive of a terrestrial pandemonium than an orderly assemblage engaged in the consideration of an important church question.

### THE REV. F. W ROBERTSON.

At Brighton I made the acquaintance of the late Rev. F. W. Robertson, who was then regarded by competent critics

as one of the most—if not *the* most—eloquent preachers in the kingdom. I used at times to report his sermons for a French lady of title, one of his numerous friends and admirers, and as I kept duplicates of some of his most striking orations, I was glad to be enabled to present them to the committee who opened a fund for the benefit of his widow immediately after his premature death. Lady Byron, the widow of the poet, was residing in Brighton at this time, and I have frequently seen her seated in a pew not far from the pulpit, listening with rapt attention to the preacher's lofty and glowing periods. After the death of Mr. Robertson, Lady Byron had a bust of the reverend gentleman chiselled by a local sculptor, who, at her ladyship's request, was enabled to procure a plaster cast of the dead man's features.

### A DOG ANECDOTE.

I may be allowed to lighten this part of my narrative with an anecdote. There was then, and I believe is now, a much more active rivalry among the members of the provincial Press than I have ever

known to be the case in London. I can only account for this by the fact that the journalists of the metropolis are very numerous, as compared with their more isolated country confrères, and their interests so much more divergent and diffused, that they naturally acquire a sort of gregarious habit, which helps to smoothe the rough angles of jealous competition, and renders them more amenable to the softening influences of genial companionship. But to my story. The reporter of the *Brighton Gazette* had enlivened an anecdotal column with a paragraph describing the performances of a well-trained dog, which, among other clever things, used to go every Thursday morning to fetch from the publishing office his master's copy of the *Gazette.* Next week, however, the paper on which I was engaged "went one further," and gravely asserted that it had a better dog story than the *Gazette;* the fact being that a retriever which used to call regularly for its master's *Guardian* had been offered a copy of the *Gazette*, on seeing which the intelligent animal shook his head, and refused to leave the place until the paper he was sent for was handed to him.

SNOW ON CHARLES II.'S DAY.

During a walk I was taking one 29th of May—Charles II.'s Day—towards that picturesque and peculiar piece of down scenery known as the Devil's Dyke, I witnessed the somewhat unusual phenomenon of a heavy, though partial, snowstorm, which for a time whitened the downs adjacent to the Dyke, and gave a singularly wintry aspect to the scene. I wrote a paragraph describing what I had seen for the paper I was then on, and afterwards saw it copied into most of the London papers.

In those days the standing population of Brighton was only about 50,000. Nevertheless the Commission which then ruled the town, in regard to all essentially municipal matters, were enabled to purchase for some £50,000 or £60,000 the Pavilion, built and so often occupied by George IV. Then, as now, in the older parts of the town the side-walks were paved with red bricks, which, from their porosity as compared with stone, were supposed to be more capable of retaining moisture, and, consequently, of being cooler to the feet in the hot season.

## A STAGE INCIDENT.

The Brighton theatre was then leased by a Mr. Nye Chart, who shortened his surname to Nye, and who leased the theatre for many years. It was here that I once witnessed a somewhat startling incident. Mr. Crawford Wilson, subsequently of considerable repute in the literary world, had undertaken the title-rôle in *Othello*. He played the part well, and was much applauded by a full house. But in the final scene, when he was supposed to stab himself, he fell upon a small glass bottle which, as he had a slight cold, he carried in the breast of his tunic, for occasional application when off the boards. This unfortunately broke, and the jagged glass inflicted so severe a wound that it prevented Mr. Crawford's appearance in another piece for which he had been billed, and for some weeks he was unable to do any active work. I did not know Mr. Crawford Wilson then—indeed, he had played under an assumed name, so that when I made his acquaintance some twenty or thirty years ago I had no idea that he was the hero of the above story. I was, therefore, rather astonished on one

occasion, when I told him this anecdote, to hear him exclaim, "My dear sir, I was the very man you speak of. That injury laid me up for weeks."

### AN EDITORIAL CRITICISM.

In connection with the same theatre I may relate an amusing story anent the proprietor of the paper on which I was then engaged. He did a good printing business, apart from the profits of his newspaper, and if a theatrical or musical company visited Brighton, and did not order its bills and posters from him, their performances were not likely to be favourably criticised. In one case, when he had been overlooked by some touring theatricals, he wrote a severe critique, mainly condemnatory of the acting of the principal tragedian in a Shakespearian part. It so happened that, owing to the illness of one of the chief actors, the piece advertised for this particular night was abandoned, and another substituted. A printer's apprentice, who at the last moment got to know of the change made in the theatrical programme, managed to filch a proof of the exceedingly caustic critique made by

my employer on the acting of the principal performers, and, doubtless for a consideration, handed it to the manager of the company. At the close of the evening the manager requested the audience to keep their seats for a few minutes, and then, coming to the foot-lights, he read the notice of the piece that had not been played, much to the astonishment of all present; but what made the matter worse was that the news of what had happened at the theatre did not get to the office of the offending critic until the following morning, when the whole of the week's edition had been put in circulation.

## EXTRAORDINARY ACCIDENTS.

I remember—this also relates to Brighton—several singular railway catastrophes, each of which created a sensation at the time. The first was the explosion of a locomotive boiler while the train to which it was attached was waiting to start on a journey from Brighton to Lewes. There were three men upon the engine at the time, but fortunately no one else was in the immediate vicinity. All who were on the engine were instantaneously

killed, two of them being cut to pieces by the shattered parts of the exploded boiler. The third man was sent up entire through the roof, and was found lying on the top with a large piece of iron protruding from his chest. In one of the other cases the man was cleanly decapitated, and the head blown over the front of the station, where, the back hair only being visible, the person who first saw it took it to be a mop. Limbs of two of the men were sent in all directions, one leg passing through a window sixty or eighty yards away, and sweeping most of the things off a table where a family was breakfasting.

Another case was absolutely astounding to all who witnessed the effect of the accident. A train of empty trucks, with a van in which about twenty plate-layers were being conveyed for duty along the line, had stopped near the Balcombe Tunnel, and while in a stationary position was run into by a down train, owing to defective signalling. The empty trucks were so completely shattered that it was only by counting the wheels, whole and broken, that any estimate could be formed of their number; but, strange to relate, although the labourers' van was splintered

into fragments, not one of its numerous occupants was killed, the only case of serious injury being that of a man who had his leg broken.

The last case I propose to narrate had also its singular features. At one point along the London line, at a place near a bridge which passed over a roadway a few miles from Brighton, a little boy, named Boaks, had placed a railway sleeper across one of the rails. A train with the tender in front, the tender being without guards, was thereby derailed, and the engine and tender, and one or two carriages, went over the bridge, knocking down the parapet. Five persons were killed by the accident—three passengers and the driver and stoker. It was said that the boy who caused the fatality, a sharp little fellow of inquiring mind, merely wanted to see what effect the engine would produce on the sleeper, instead of which he only saw the effect the sleeper produced on the train and its occupants.

## THIRD CLASS TRAVELLING IN THE FORTIES.

Here it will not be amiss to inform the railway passenger of the present day how

his grandfather, when unable to afford the luxury of a compartment superior to the third, was compelled to travel on the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway in 1848. Although the company had to provide a parliamentary train each way once a day, the Act of Parliament, which fixed the third class fare at a penny a mile, did not make it compulsory on them to provide the carriages used in this particular class with decent sides, to say nothing of roofs, which were altogether wanting, and the consequence was that wet or fine, hail, wind, sleet, or snow, a third class carriage strongly resembled an ordinary coal truck, except that it had bare wooden seats. It was in one of these miserable conveyances that I was conveyed to Brighton, in the month of February, for the first time. All the parliamentary trains used to stop at every station on the line, and the fifty-two miles' journey generally occupied from three and a half to four hours. On the afternoon of which I write the weather was almost as bad as it could be. All the way snow and sleet, alternated occasionally by chilling, drenching rain, were in evidence throughout the journey, and I am sorry to say that in the same compartment with

me were women and little children, some of whom were not too comfortably clad. However, we got to Brighton at last, half drowned and half frozen, and even now, when I contrast the horrors of that journey with the comfortable accommodation nowadays provided by the Midland and some other of the principal railway companies for their third class passengers, I almost shudder to think of the tortures to which the poor traveller was put not much more than half a century ago.

## CALM AND STORM.

One sunny day, after attending an inquest on the body of a murdered woman, I hired a small boat and sculled out in a southerly direction. There was not at that time a ripple on the surface of the water, which in reality had the appearance of a hugh sheet of oil, and as I lazily pulled farther and farther from the shore the long line of frontage became so indistinct that I began to think it time to turn the tiny boat I had selected, as light and easy to pull, and to make the homeward track. No sooner had I changed my direction than I noticed on the horizon, almost due south but a little

to the west, a gradually-increasing stretch of leaden-coloured haze, totally unlike an ordinary cloud and the possible precursor of a rapid and possibly dangerous change of weather. Presently too I noticed on the face of the hitherto smooth water, at first many yards apart, but gradually multiplying in number and lessening in proximity, numbers of little marks like the impressions of a cat's feet. This, I assumed, was what the sailors describe as the "cat's-paw," generally regarded as the herald of a storm, and as the indentations drew together and produced at first small ripples and then waves, which by and by were soon crested with foam, and rapidly increased in height as the wind became more and more violent, I pulled with all the power I could command, beginning then to realise what would happen should I break or lose a scull, or should a heavy wave find a lodgement in my frail craft. After a long and severe tug I found myself nearing the beach, and as my boat rose with the billows I could perceive a crowd of people who were evidently watching my approach and probably speculating on my chances of landing in safety. Luckily for me, at the critical moment a huge wave carried

the boat high up on the shingle, and a few boatmen, who were among the onlookers, promptly seized the little skiff and hauled it beyond the reach of the following waves. I found next day that one of the Brighton papers had made a paragraph of the incident under the headline, "Narrow escape from drowning."

## ROBERT HUNT AND ELECTRICITY.

Among the lectures I had to attend during my Brighton experiences, I remember one that was delivered by Mr. Robert Hunt, a well-known scientist of those days, who had peculiar theories on the subject of electricity, to which he accredited very extraordinary results. One point he elaborated had relation to the magnet and the reason why the needle of the mariner's compass always points to the north. His theory was this: From sunrise to sunset there is a current of electricity which traverses the earth from east to west, the force of which is greatest at the meridian. It was, he said, a well-known fact in electricity that a needle, subjected to the action of an electric current, instantly set itself at right angles to the subtle

stream, and, consequently, the needle of the compass, yielding to the action of the electricity created by the sun, always pointed north and south. But one of the most astounding effects of electric force, narrated by Mr. Hunt as a fact, was the influence it had in the resolution of earthy matter into minerals of different kinds. Following up the assertion that a constant quantity of electricity was produced by every artesian well, he stated that a large mass of puddled Stourbridge clay was subjected for two years to the current from a deep well of this character, and that at the end of that period, when it was cut open, it was no longer a block of clay, but displayed in its interior all kinds of hitherto unsuspected constituents, such as slate, strata of spar, iron pirites, and copper nodules, together with other, but less marked, transformations from the original material.

### THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

Everybody of course is aware that when the first Great Exhibition, inaugurated by Prince Albert in 1851 was closed, it was generally thought that it would be a great loss to all lovers of the

beautiful if that vast and fairy-like structure were allowed to disappear, and so pass into oblivion. Consequently a company was formed which not only bought the original building and acquired the beautiful site on which the resuscitated Palace now stands, but, after designs furnished by the late Sir Joseph Paxton, added immensely to its architectural features by substituting for the flat roof of the old nave and transept a circular crystal framework, which, owing to the commanding height on which the building stands, displays its lofty and glittering summit over many miles of metropolitan and rural surroundings. During the rebuilding of this immense and hitherto unexcelled edifice, it was my duty to pay occasional visits to Sydenham in order to record the progress made with the work, and it struck me that it would be almost impossible to surpass the celerity with which the external portions of the glass and iron fabric, with its two flanking towers, were put together and made ready for the construction of the numerous inner courts. These, of course, in consequence of their artistic requirements, including hundreds of reproductions of the finest statuary wrought by

Greek and Italian masters, together with models of the most famous buildings of Egypt, Rome, Italy and Spain, supplemented by replicas of celebrated works copied from bronze and marble, iron and brass, took much time; but the whole was finished with marvellous rapidity, and the nation has so far retained, in close proximity to its capital, a Palace which, with its floral and other surroundings, is both magnificent and unique.

### ELECTIONS AT WAKEFIELD—MR. COBDEN.

Leaving Brighton after several years' sojourn, I rejoined my father, who was then editing the *Wakefield Express*. I did not remain long in the West Riding capital, though during the interval spent between that engagement and my subsequent return to Brighton I had the opportunity of witnessing the way in which a Yorkshire borough election was carried on in those days of open voting and riotous nominations. A general election was then taking place, and in what is now the city of Wakefield a great struggle was going on between two rich local magnates, one—the Liberal candidate—being a banker, and

the other—his Conservative opponent—a corn merchant. It was afterwards said that this election cost the two candidates pretty nearly £60,000, an expenditure which was tolerably equally divided between them, by far the major portion being spent in the grossest acts of treating and bribery. Open house in hotels, inns, and beer-shops was the order of the day, and at night, when the more disreputable of the voters had been fairly soaked by the day's potations, scenes of riot and disorder were of constant occurrence all over the place. My father, who was editing the organ supporting the Liberal candidate, was attacked by a gang of roughs belonging to the other side, while coming from a meeting held at an hotel near the market-place, I being with him, and we were only saved from a severe mauling, as our assailants were armed with bludgeons, by the opportune appearance of a force of police, who escorted us home. The streets were constantly paraded by bands flying the colours of the two rivals, and whenever the opposite parties met there was sure to be a scrimmage, in which instruments and flags were doomed to destruction. In

the end the Conservative triumphed, but at the heavy cost I have mentioned. I forget whether there was a petition on this occasion; but if not, I am sure there ought to have been.

At the same general election Richard Cobden, the great Free Trade champion, was chosen for the last time as one of the members for the West Riding. It had been arranged than an expensive contest should be avoided by a compromise—Mr. Denison to be returned as the Conservative member, while Cobden was to be retained as the Liberal representative. This agreement was duly carried out. The hustings were erected in the market-place, in the open air, and the two candidates having been declared duly elected were, according to the then prevailing custom, girded with the belts and swords proclaiming their status as knights of the shire. I recollect that, while Mr. Cobden was addressing the multitude gathered in front of the platform, it began to rain, and as the reporters had to stand with the rest of the crowd, without protection from the elements, the downpour softened the pages of their notebooks so that writing was a matter of difficulty, especially as

no desk or other support was obtainable. Cobden had not got far, however, when a good-natured, broad-shouldered workman standing next to me said: "Here, lad, put thy notebook on my shoulder. It 'll be as good as a desk for thee." I gladly took advantage of the offer, and in this way ensured what was, after all, a good report of the great statesman's speech.

Returning to Brighton after my Yorkshire experience, I joined the staff of the *Examiner*, then newly launched as a weekly paper. The proprietor was a Mr. Eyles, and the editor a Mr. Samuel Simes, a good writer, a clever musician, and a brilliant conversationalist. He was a stoutly-built man, with a strong facial resemblance to the portraits of Dr. Johnson, and there was something in the measured periods and the deep rich voice of my then chief, that materially assisted the fancied resemblance to the great lexicographer. I only remained a year on the *Examiner*, as a promised rise in salary was not kept, and was then offered a more lucrative position on my old paper the *Guardian*. Here I remained another year or so during uneventful times.

## MANCHESTER DURING THE CRIMEAN WAR—MR. BRIGHT REFUSED A HEARING.

I next obtained an engagement on the *Manchester Examiner and Times*, then about to be converted from a bi-weekly to a daily paper. This was in 1854 during the Crimean War. The *Examiner* was owned by a co-partnery, which included Mr. John Bright, at that period member for Manchester; Mr. Henry Rawson, a gentleman of means and influence in the city; Mr. Findlay, proprietor of a large tailoring establishment in St. Anne's Square; and Mr. Ireland, the managing director.

Although Manchester was not so large and flourishing a city in those days as it has since become, the work done by the reporting staff was much more arduous than it is now, partly because, in the absence of the enormous telegraphic correspondence received at the present time from all parts of the world, greater attention was paid to local details, so that reports, which are now compressed within narrow limits, in those days would cover an amplitude of space. The country newspapers then, as now, could boast some first-rate journalists, and one of

my Manchester colleagues performed, I remember, one of the most marvellous reporting feats that have come under my cognizance. I refer to Mr. Roger Acton, subsequently for many years a valued member of the staff of the *Illustrated News*. Acton was a good Italian scholar, writing and speaking that language with the fluency of a native. On one occasion he was sent to report a lecture by Father Gavazzi, the eloquent Italian patriot, who was touring England on behalf of the movement then on foot for securing the independence of his country. At the time referred to Gavazzi, not having mastered the English language, delivered his orations in his native tongue, and Mr. Acton translating Italian into English as the lecture proceeded, produced a lengthy report, which was practically verbatim in its completeness. I have never known such a feat accomplished by any other man.

It will be remembered that when the Crimean War began Mr. Bright had aroused a strongly hostile feeling throughout the country by his opposition to the campaign — a feeling shared by his Manchester constituents as strongly as by the rest of the British people, with

whom neither of the wars of the last half century have been so popular, except, perhaps, the recent struggle in South Africa. When Mr. Bright came to address his constituents in the great cotton city, during the progress of hostilities, the Town Hall was fixed upon as the place of meeting. Long before his arrival the large upstairs room was densely packed—so full was it, in fact, that down the broad staircase and out into the street stood many hundreds of people who could not obtain entrance to the meeting.

After the preliminary part of the business had been gone through Mr. Bright rose to address the assembly, but his appearance was hailed with such a storm of hooting, hissing, whistling, and shouts of derision that not one sentence he tried to utter could be heard even by the reporters who were seated immediately below the platform. Every now and then Mr. Heron (afterwards Sir Joseph Heron), the Town Clerk, appealed for fair play, and what he said was listened to in silence, but the instant Mr. Bright renewed his attempt to get a hearing the babel recommenced, and was continued as long as the member for the city was

on his legs. I can only compare the effect of the din upon my auditory nerves with what might be expected by anyone shut up in a belfry with all the bells going at the same time. As a last resource Mr. Bright beckoned to the reporters to mount their table so that he might address them in closer proximity, but although this was done it was also in vain. Mr. Bright, who possessed more than ordinary lung power, was unable to make himself heard even by those who stood within a yard of him. At length, after a short colloquy with his friends on the platform, it was arranged that he and they should adjourn to the League Chambers, where in the comparative privacy of his own circle Mr. Bright was enabled to deliver the speech he had prepared and to have it duly reported throughout the kingdom. Ordinarily Mr. Bright was not what I should call a fast speaker, his utterances averaging almost exactly three newspaper columns per hour; but on this occasion, owing to the excitement occasioned by the persistent refusal of the Town Hall audience to hear him, he spoke with a rapidity that severely tried the skill of the most practised stenographists.

MR. BRIGHT AND SIR JOHN PAKINGTON.

The conduct of the Manchester public towards their once popular member was bitterly resented by Mr. Bright, and when he was rejected by the great manufacturing constituency he accepted an invitation from the people of Birmingham, and being elected, although at the time away from England in delicate health, he continued to sit for that constituency up to the time of his death. Probably no English orator of his day, and very few before or since, has exercised so powerful an influence on the audience he addressed. If keen or caustic argument or criticism were needed, no one could more readily apply the one or the other to the case in hand, and if pathos were demanded he could move his audience to tears, as he notably did on one occasion when, in speaking of the horrors of the war in the House of Commons, he pointed to the empty seats of distinguished soldiers slain on Russian battlefields and for ever lost to their country and their homes. Moreover, he was a dangerous man to interrupt, unless the member who was rash enough to do so was prepared for a few castigatory

sentences. I recollect an occasion when, being then in Opposition, Mr. Bright was making a strong attack upon the Tory Government. Sir John Pakington, then Minister for War, who was seated next to Mr. Disraeli on the Treasury bench, essayed several times to interject some reply or contradiction to what the member for Birmingham was saying; but on each occasion he was pulled back by his leader, who caught hold of his coat lappets and kept him in his place. At last, however, Sir John, managing to evade the usual tug, jumped to his feet and questioned a statement just made by the Midland Demosthenes. With a sweep of the hand across his massive brow, Mr. Bright ejaculated, "Ha! the right hon. gentleman interrupts me! Why, it was only the other day that the right hon. gentleman occupied the position of First Lord of the Admiralty, and in that capacity had supreme command of Her Majesty's navy. To-day we find him in the equally powerful position of Minister for War; and I have no doubt that if Her Majesty should require his services as the head of any other responsible department, the right hon. gentleman would be willing to accept

the appointment; but as it is there is not a soldier who sweats beneath the sun of India, or shivers and freezes amid the snows of Canada, but sweats or shivers at the nod of the right hon. gentleman." There was not, perhaps, very much in this, but it raised shouts of laughter from both sides of the House, and the impromptu bit of ridicule had the effect of keeping Sir John quiet during the remainder of Mr. Bright's speech.

### MANCHESTER WATER SUPPLY.

I was much struck, while in Manchester, with the extraordinary work which I frequently saw done by the City Fire Brigade. I have seen huge factories and warehouses blazing from end to end, like the furnaces the railway passenger passes at night near Sheffield and Leeds, and yet, although other great buildings were immediately adjacent, the conflagration was always confined to the place of origin. This was attributable to the enormous force of water derived from the mains connected with the Denton and Woodhead reservoirs, by which Manchester was then supplied.

Since then the supply has been increased by the addition of Lake Thirlmere, which lies at the foot of Helvelyn, and the area of which has been so greatly enlarged that there is no likelihood of the great cotton city ever being short of one of the chief necessaries of life.

## PLYMOUTH.

In an evil hour I left the *Examiner*, and joined the *Manchester Telegraph*. This paper failed shortly afterwards, and I was consequently obliged to accept an engagement at Plymouth, where for some time I was practically the entire "staff" of the *Mail*, a paper published once a week. Here, in addition to sub-editorial and reporting duties, I had to write reviews of books, long theatrical notices and occasional leaderettes, as well as to read all the proofs. My Plymouth experiences, however, were not of a character requiring much space in these memoirs. The only incident worthy of record is one associated with Lord Haldon, then Sir Lawrence Palk, M.P. I had been sent to a place called Modbury, to report a speech which Sir Lawrence was to make at a Farmers'

Club; but having to stop half-way to give an account of a brutal poaching affray that was being considered in petty sessions, and being detained much longer than I had expected, I did not reach Modbury until Sir Lawrence had delivered his speech and gone away, while the whole of his auditory, with one exception, had likewise returned to their homes. The exception referred to I interviewed. He was not a man of the highest intelligence, and, moreover, had evidently been indulging rather freely in alcoholic beverages. He therefore required considerable "pumping," and during the process I am sorry to say I found it necessary to ply him with a little more liquor. As I was well up in the political topics of the day, and as I knew the view Sir Lawrence must have taken on each, I had only to ascertain which of the current subjects he had touched upon, and this I did so thoroughly that my friend the farmer at last said with some astonishment: "Why, you might have been here." On returning to Plymouth I wrote about half a column of Sir Lawrence's speech, of course telling my employer, Mr. Richards, the circumstances under which

I had done it. The report duly appeared, and a few days afterwards Mr. Richards, who was a personal friend of Sir Lawrence, called me to him and said he wished to point out how I had "put my foot in it." He added: "I have just had a letter from Sir Lawrence, and this is what he says: 'By the way, where the deuce did you get that report of my speech at Modbury last week? I know there was no reporter present, and I am certain there was not a farmer in the room who could have written that account. It is exactly what I said, only some of the topics are inverted." I need not say that the matter was ultimately explained to Sir Lawrence—I hope to his satisfaction.

## JOHN FROST, THE NEWPORT CHARTIST.

Returning to Preston, where as a boy I had begun my journalistic career, I was engaged as chief reporter on the *Guardian*, a position I occupied for about a twelvemonth. The period was one which presented few incidents that I am able to recall of an interesting character, although there is one which may be worth a place in these reminiscences.

Accompanied by the then editor of the paper I was serving, Mr. J. J. Merriman, I went one Sunday to a place some few miles away, the name of which I am not quite certain about, though I think it was Padiham. Here we had to meet Mr. John Frost, a former mayor of Newport, who, along with two other prominent Chartist agitators—Williams and Jones—had been tried, convicted, and condemned to death for taking part in a sanguinary riot which occurred at Newport on the 4th of November, 1839. On that occasion the rioters were fired on by soldiers, and the latter in turn were shot at by the mob; the then mayor, Mr. Phillips, and others being wounded, while the Chartists were not dispersed until twenty of their number were killed and many others injured. The death sentence on Frost and his two companions was, however, commuted to transportation for life, and the three were sent away to the penal settlement, which was then our chief place of transportation, in Van Diemen's Land. Frost and his friends were amnestied in 1856, after sixteen years of penal servitude, and on the return of the former he arranged to deliver a series of speeches reciting his

wrongs, and condemnatory of the convict system which was then in force. It was his opening addresses I was instructed to report, one being delivered in the earlier part of the day and the other in the afternoon. The audience in each case was restricted to the masculine sex, females not being admitted on account of the terrible nature of some of the disclosures about to be made. The first of the two discourses dealing with the trial, detention in gaol prior to the voyage out, and what occurred on board the ship which took the prisoners to their place of servitude was full of thrilling facts. The returned exile, a man of venerable appearance and good education, gave the most solemn assurances of the absolute truth of everything on which he dwelt, and some of his statements related to matters of so horrible and revolting a character that I am unable even to indicate their nature. It may, however, be said that he broadly and unhesitatingly accused the officials of the gaol in which he was confined, pending the commutation of the death sentence, of suggesting to himself and his companions the idea as well as the means of committing suicide. Similar suggestions he averred were

repeated during the voyage out on board ship, where, he also stated, all three were sounded as to the practicability of the convicts taking possession of the vessel, murdering the officers, and securing their own freedom. To none of these proposals, however, would either he or his friends assent, and when the prisoners had reached their destination Frost was, he said, accosted by the officer in whose charge they had been, in some such words as these: "Frost, I am happy to congratulate you on your excellent conduct during the voyage, and I may add that there is not an act you have done, and very little that you and the others have said, with which I have not been made fully acquainted." Shortly after the two addresses had been delivered I published them in pamphlet form, omitting, of course, the passages to which I have referred as unfit for reproduction. I may add that notwithstanding what he must have endured during his lengthy punishment Frost lived to the patriarchal age of 96.

It may not be amiss, while on this subject, to recall the main objects of the Chartist agitation and how much of the charter has since been granted by

Parliament. The charter they desired to obtain embodied six points: Universal Suffrage, Vote by Ballot, Annual Parliaments, Payment of Members, Abolition of Members' Property Qualification, and Equal Electoral Districts. Although in the days of this movement the Chartists were regarded by the rest of the community with the same sort of loathing as now attaches to professed anarchists, it is surprising to note, in the present political condition of the country, how large a portion of the Chartist programme has obtained acceptance. Vote by ballot has long been the law of elections—parliamentary and municipal; the property qualification of members has long been abolished; electoral districts have been partially equalised; and although members are not yet paid by the State, a number of them are supported by their constituents. Annual Parliaments are not likely to follow, because of the political confusion they would entail year by year; and while universal suffrage has not yet arrived, a considerable step was made in that direction when a Tory Government conceded the electoral franchise to householders, lodgers, and men in service.

## SUNDERLAND IN 1856-7.

Sunderland was the scene of my next engagement. Here I was, in the first place, reporter, and subsequently editor and manager of the *Sunderland Times* and a second paper published from the same office entitled the *Shields Advocate*. Both of these were weekly publications; but when the management was vested in me I converted a weekly supplementary sheet of the *Times* into a mid-week issue, which had a wholesome effect upon both circulation and advertisement receipts. This was during the time of the Indian Mutiny, which followed the close of the Crimean War. Sunderland in those days was one of the chief shipbuilding ports of the world, its yearly record being greater than that of New York, which then stood second in precedence. The vessels turned out by the northern shipwrights were then mostly, if not the whole of them, built of wood, and although the River Wear, on whose banks the shipyards were located, is but a narrow waterway, vessels of considerable tonnage were there constructed, the ways down which they were launched being laid in oblique lines, and the progress of

the ships checked by heavy rafts of loose timbers. It might be expected that the huge baulks thus employed would seriously damage the sterns of the launched ships, but this was not the case in any instance with which I am acquainted.

### A GALLANT RESCUE.

On that north-eastern coast furious storms are frequent, especially in winter, and the first touch of neuralgia I ever experienced was the result of facing an easterly wind watching the work of saving a Norwegian crew, whose barque had been blown ashore during a terrific gale. The rocket life-line had been fired over the rigging of the unfortunate vessel; but none of the crew knew how to handle the apparatus, and as the waves were momentarily dashing over the doomed ship, which was in imminent peril of breaking up, and no boat could possibly live in such a sea, a man named Hudson, a carver and guilder belonging to the town, who was credited with having already saved many persons from a watery grave, volunteered to clamber along the rocket-rope and work the life-saving chair

or cradle. Finding that the crew had fastened the rocket end of the line to the rigging, Hudson dashed into the surf, and, working along the rope with hands and feet, managed to reach the ship in safety, though the crowd of onlookers were fearful of his being washed off by the waves which, one after another, enveloped him in his perilous progress. Once on board, the brave fellow speedily got the cradle to work, sending down, first of all, the captain's wife and child; then, one by one, despatching the crew, the last of whom was the skipper; he finally, amid cheers which were heard even above the roar of the tempest, managed to reach the shore unharmed, beyond the soaking he had incurred.

### HUDSON, THE RAILWAY KING.

It was here, during a general election, that George Hudson, renowned in his palmy days as the "Railway King," but now, not only figuratively but literally, out at elbows, came for re-election by his Sunderland constituents. It was said that there were numerous writs out against him, and that they were in the hands of certain sheriffs' officers who had followed

him from London and would await the issue of the election, so that in case he was defeated he might, on the expiration of his forty days' privilege as a Member of Parliament, be duly arrested. But the writs were not served, as George was saved that indignity by his good-natured constituents.

While in Sunderland I had a narrow escape from becoming a newspaper proprietor. The *Sunderland Times* was owned by the then Town Clerk and another lawyer, who having been badly served, and to their great loss, by my immediate predecessor, were anxious to sell the property. They accordingly called in a valuer, on whose report they offered the concern for sale; but the only offer they got was from a man whose political views were opposed to their own, and who, if he secured the two papers, would have diverted what were then Conservative publications into prints of the deepest Radical dye. They, consequently, asked me whether I could raise the purchase money, and offered me the property for several hundreds less than had been tendered by the other individual. I was in a fair way to secure the money through a local bank, but on

the Monday prior to the Wednesday on which I could have completed the transaction, I noticed, on my way to the *Times* office, a crowd in front of the bank premises, and found that the establishment had suspended payment in consequence of an over-draft of many thousands of pounds by one of the principal shipbuilders in the town. The result was that the property went to the other man, and shortly afterwards I ceased to have any connection with it.

### A MURDER IN SOMERSET.

In the same year I accepted an engagement in Somerset as editor of the *Taunton Courier*, a post I only retained for five weeks, because I refused to canvass for advertisements, and perform other duties which I considered derogatory to my position. During this brief interval I had a somewhat singular experience. The news came one morning that at a little roadside inn, several miles from Taunton, an old married couple had been found murdered. Having verified this statement at the police station, I was driven to the spot

by Mr. Goldsmith, the then superintendent of the borough constabulary. As we passed through the long street of straggling houses which led to the scene of the tragedy, most of the inhabitants were at their doors, and from some of the ejaculations which reached our ears, they seemed to be under the impression that the murderer had been taken and was riding with the well-known police officer. Realising this, Mr. Goldsmith pulled out his cigar case and laughingly said, "They think you are my prisoner! Take a cigar, and that will dispel the delusion." When we got to the house where the bodies had been found by some early caller, I saw a number of policemen making a rigid search of the place. While this was going on I began to question a young man, who told me he was a grandson of the aged couple. I was trying to obtain from him some information about the habits and mode of life of the old people, but the young fellow's answers were so confused and contradictory that I ceased to question him, and went at once to Mr. Goldsmith, to whom I related what I had heard, and I was not surprised to hear him order a couple of his men to keep a sharp eye on

the youth, and under no circumstances let him leave the house. In the meantime one of the search party, noticing that a portion of a haystack in the back yard had been disturbed, thrust his arm into a hole that had been made and pulled out a bundle, which contained several articles of silver known to have belonged to the murdered pair, a love letter addressed to the grandson by his sweetheart, a copy of the *Family Herald*, from which a page had been partly torn, and several other things, afterwards shown to have belonged to his grandparents. Moreover, the handkerchief in which the articles were tied was subsequently proved to be the property of the grandson. The murders were perpetrated under singular circumstances. Leading from the house, by a door which connected the two, was an outbuilding in which the old man stored his beer, there being an entrance at either end. There is little doubt that having knocked, first at the door farthest from the house, the murderer went round to the other end, and, while the outer door was being unlocked, entered the place and shot his grandfather in the back. This done, the assassin found his way to the bedroom in which the old woman was

sleeping and took her life by beating her about the head with a hay knife. In the outhouse where the old man was shot was found a piece of singed paper, which had been used as wadding for the gun, and this, when compared with the *Family Herald*, corresponded exactly with the printed matter on the torn page of the number found in the haystack. The grandson was subsequently tried at the Somerset Assizes, convicted on the clearest possible evidence, and hanged.

### A SKILLED BURGLAR.

During the remainder of my stay in Taunton, Mr. Goldsmith apprehended a man who, he said, was the most skilful burglar in the West of England, and who, at the time of his arrest, while engaged in burglarious operations, had in his possession some of the artfully constructed implements which he used in prosecuting his criminal career. One of these was a form of centre-bit, having a rounded disk, about three and a half inches in diameter, with a sharp cutting steel blade an inch long at the rim. To show how easy it was with an instrument of this sort to cut a circular hole through

a door, so as to get an arm through and undo both lock and bolts, my friend set to work on a piece of sound oak paling, which he cut through in two minutes and a half. He told me that his prisoner, who had served previous terms of imprisonment, said to him when apprehended, "I suppose it 'll be ten years or a lifer this time, so I don't mind giving you a little tip. You know they are making safe-locks so hard now that we can't file 'em, and the keyholes so small that we can't blow 'em up with gunpowder. But I 'll tell you what we can do. Them locks is so brittle that you 've only to take a cold-chisel and give 'em a heavy blow, and they 'll smash to pieces like glass."

## NORFOLK AND NORWICH.

My next engagement was on the *Norwich Mercury*. This was during the year of the extraordinary comet, known as Donati's, which was visible for four or five months, and was accompanied by a lengthy period of heat and drought, which burnt up both grass and roots, more than doubled the price of hay, and yet gave the country one of the finest

wheat harvests ever recorded. In some parts of the kingdom most of the wells were dried up, and the inhabitants were put to sore straits to get anything like an adequate supply of water for drinking and cooking purposes, let alone the demands of cleanliness. I remember how, during the hot nights of July and August, and even well into September, people used to sit outside their houses to enjoy the cooler atmosphere of the open streets and gardens, so delightfully in contrast with the close and stuffy air of the indoor rooms.

The first meeting I attended in the East Anglican capital was in connection with the Norfolk and Norwich Infirmary, or Hospital, and there I had the opportunity of looking over the museum, which contains, among other things of considerable interest, a number of cases filled with almost countless results of operations for stone. Owing to the prevalence in the Norfolk soil of chalk and other deposits having a tendency to promote the formation of calculi, the operations for stone in this hospital are more numerous than in any other part of the kingdom of equal population. In the cases I have spoken of there are

stones weighing from sixteen ounces in the case of adults to a few grains in the case of infants, each of the larger ones being labelled and dated, and the success or otherwise of the operation recorded. Some of them have been cut and polished, and have a certain resemblance to agate. The skill acquired by the hospital surgeons in this department of their beneficent work is recognised far and near, and one of their number, the late Dr. Cadge, obtained more than European fame by the success he achieved as a stone specialist.

### WILLIAM FREDERICK WYNDHAM AND THE FELBRIGG ESTATE.

During my residence in Norwich, which lasted rather more than seven years, several notable events occurred. The first I need mention was the great trial which took place in one of the old law courts at Westminster, relative to the sanity or otherwise of William Frederick Wyndham, heir to the Felbrigg Estate, near Cromer. The proceedings were initiated by his relatives partly with a view of annulling

a marriage he had entered into, but mainly to prevent his dissipating the large fortune left to him as heir to a valuable estate. The case was heard in 1862 and lasted thirty-four days, during which as many as one hundred and forty witnesses were examined. In the result Wyndham was found to be sane and capable of managing his own affairs, each of the parties having to pay its own costs, which were enormous. Being now at liberty to do what he chose with such portions of his property as he could absolutely control, Wyndham set up his home at Felbrigg, and being fond of horses, and an excellent "whip," he purchased the coach which used to run between Norwich and Cromer before the railway was constructed, and drove it almost daily on both the out and home journeys. His assistant who accompanied him in all his drives was a Mr. Tom Searle, who had driven the Cromer coach for years before Wyndham bought it.

I was introduced to Wyndham under strange circumstances. The police court business having just terminated, I went with Mr. Hitchman, the then

chief constable of the Norwich police, and an old friend of mine, whom I had known in Devonport, to have a friendly glass before luncheon. In the principal room of the hostelry to which we repaired we found William Frederick Wyndham on his knees fastening a spade guinea to his assistant coachman's watch chain, and when he had done this and heard Mr. Hitchman order two glasses of "bitter," he stopped the order, saying we should not drink beer in his presence. Then, turning to the waiter, he said, "Bring a bottle of Moët, and four champagne glasses." When the waiter brought in the wine there were four of the recognised champagne glasses on the tray. These were promptly seized by Wyndham and thrown into the fireplace, and the order given to the astonished servitor, "Bring some proper champagne glasses." Knowing, I suppose, some of Wyndham's eccentricities, the waiter returned with four tumblers. "That's right," said Wyndham, "and in future I hope you'll remember how a gentleman ought to drink champagne."

Having on subsequent occasions met the master of Felbrigg under

circumstances of a social character, we became fairly well acquainted, and this acquaintance once gave rise to an extraordinary incident. I was driving to Cromer one day to report some evening meeting, and when within about a mile from Aylsham, which is half-way between Cromer and Norwich, I met the Cromer coach returning to the city. The vehicle was full of passengers. anxious no doubt to finish their journey. However, Wyndham, seeing me, pulled up and asked where I was going. I told him, and to everybody's astonishment he said, "Then we must have a drink at the half-way house," and, pulling his four horses round in a rather narrow part of the road, he drove back to Aylsham, where his passengers had to wait while he and his coachman and myself consumed a bottle of his favourite beverage. Not very long after that Wyndham died, I believe of heart failure, precipitated no doubt by his peculiar habits. He was said to have got rid of the major portion of the property he had the right to dispose of; but the Felbrigg Estate, which was entailed, was left to his descendants, there being one child at the time of his death.

## THE CATTLE PLAGUE IN NORFOLK.

While I was still employed on the Norwich Press the Cattle Plague, fraught with such disastrous consequences to the agricultural interest in many portions of the kingdom, broke out. Its ravages in some parts of Norfolk were so severe that a sort of panic was created, which led to every conceivable method of dealing with the evil. I was sent to numerous farms about the country to describe the nature and extent of this terrible visitation, and I can truly say that I have witnessed few more pitiable sights than those I then had occasion to record. Until they were mercifully pole-axed the sufferings of the poor beasts were terrible to behold. The difficulty of breathing and the moaning of the animals made a painful impression on all who saw them, while the heavy losses inflicted on stock producers occasioned a large amount of distress among the farming community. Although isolation was everywhere resorted to, and the slaughtered animals were buried in pits filled with quick-lime, the infection continued to spread, until at length, by the most rigid legislative enactments, strictly enforced throughout the

kingdom, the mischief was finally stamped out. I remember the passage of the Cattle Plague Act through the House of Commons, and the almost ceaseless debates which took place in committee on the clauses of the Bill. The measure had, of course, awakened the strongest interest among the agricultural members, most of whom were more or less affected, as owners of stock, by its proposals. Amendment after amendment was daily placed upon the agenda, until in the end the paper containing them assumed the proportions of a volume. And worse than all for poor Mr. Ward Hunt, who had charge of the measure on behalf of the Government, so many amendments were adopted that, when at last the Bill was dragged through the committee stage, the sponsor complained, almost with tears in his eyes, that from preamble to appendices, there was not a single line remaining in the measure as it was originally drafted. Nevertheless, the Act, notwithstanding its numerous alterations and additions, has proved a useful and beneficial measure; for not only has it prevented a return of the dreaded rinderpest, which continued to exist in certain parts of the Continent, but the stringent

application of its repressive clauses has had a wholesome effect in stamping out or preventing the spread of other diseases to which cattle, sheep and pigs are at times subjected, including foot and mouth disease and swine fever.

### DISTRESS IN THE EAST ANGLICAN CAPITAL.

It was my lot, one severe winter, to be sent among the very poorest of the inhabitants of the ancient city. There was at that time an abnormal amount of distress in Norwich and its suburbs, accompanied by virulent disease, including typhus and scarlet fever, together with several malignant forms of lung complaint. I was instructed to make a tour of the most squalid portions of the town, and, in the performance of this unusual function, I had the good fortune to be accompanied on my rounds by Mr. Clarke, the then Sanitary Inspector, an active and intelligent officer, who had a thorough knowledge of all the courts, alleys, and byways in which poverty and misery were chiefly to be found. We spent three days in this unwholesome and unthankful work, in the course of which I witnessed scenes

I could hardly have believed would be found in a well-to-do city, boasting some six-and-thirty parish churches, and a fair proportion of charitable and philanthropic institutions. The inspector and I took such precautions as were deemed necessary to combat the risks of infection and contagion, each of us sallying forth in the commonest of disused garments, which of course were carefully disinfected on returning to our homes. Some of the painful and distressing sights which met our gaze are still vividly impressed upon my memory, and their effect was to give me a better understanding than I had hitherto had of the extreme reluctance of even the very poorest of our people, although worn by disease and suffering, cold and hunger, to accept the shelter of the workhouse and the remedial treatment offered by the infirmaries. It is unnecessary to go into detail regarding the numerous cases which passed under our review; one or two instances will suffice. The first was that of a young woman, belonging to the "unfortunate class," who was lying alone in a squalid room forming part of a tumble-down building overlooking the Wensum river. The windows had lost most of their

panes, the plaster had fallen from the walls and exhibited a sort of network of laths and bare timbers, the flooring was decayed and treacherous, the grate contained no vestige of coal or firewood, and near the fevered inmate, who lay on some straw and was covered with a piece of sackcloth, the only food available was a jug of water and a crust of bread, which someone must have brought her, as she was absolutely unable to rise from her miserable pallet. Her case seemed to be unknown to the Poor Law officials, but my friend, the inspector, took care to send a relieving officer to her aid, and she was subsequently taken to the workhouse infirmary, where she was properly attended to. Another case was that of a poor woman with three children, all so slenderly clad, and so scantily provided for in other respects, that how they could have been kept alive during the arctic winter which had then prevailed for a week or two is a problem I am at a loss to solve. The mother, whose husband was in gaol for some petty theft, told us she would rather they all died than be sent to the workhouse. They had no fire, and though an iron pot stood on the hearth

there was nothing in it, and their bedding, like that of the woman already spoken of, consisted of straw and a few pieces of sacking. I am glad to say that the articles in which I described the wretched condition of these outcasts had the effect of inaugurating a fund, which began with a handsome contribution from a wealthy and benevolent gentleman resident in the neighbourhood —the late Mr. Richard Gurney—and which under prompt and discriminating management, became the means of relieving a large amount of the terrible distress I have been endeavouring, though I fear but feebly, to describe.

## VALENTINE'S EVE IN NORFOLK.

Norwich, in common with Yarmouth, Swaffham, and one or two other Norfolk towns, has, or certainly had in my time, a peculiar custom which I think is not to be found in any other portion of the King's dominions. Elsewhere, the fourteenth of February—St. Valentine's Day—is observed as the one great occasion on which friends and lovers send special greetings to each other, and all these epistles are timed to reach their

destination on that particular date. But in those parts of Norfolk where the memory of the martyred saint is kept alive by the people, the form of the "valentine" and the date of its receipt differ from the common mode of commemoration accepted by the rest of the kingdom. Instead of pictorial and embossed missives, the Norfolk valentines take the shape of presents, which may consist of anything the sender regards as acceptable to the recipient. Moreover, these presentations must be made, not on St. Valentine's Day, but on St. Valentine's Eve, the donor invariably withholding his name, so that the person to whom the present is sent must guess, as he or she best may, who is the sender. The delivery of valentines actually begins at dusk, or when darkness has absolutely set in, and it is only in those cases where distance separates the giver from the receiver that they are entrusted to the post or goods carrier. The usual mode of ensuring that the gift should reach the person for whom it is intended is to address the parcel, or whatever it may be, to So-and-so, "with Valentine's love"; then, after depositing it on the steps and knocking furiously

at the door, as if giving an alarm in case of fire, the messenger hides in some convenient recess, whence he can see whether it is picked up and taken within. It is a point of honour with the recipient to wait a sufficient time before opening the door and taking up the valentine, also to refrain from looking up or down the street to see by whom it has been left.

Norfolk valentines assume every conceivable form, from costly jewellery to a present of clay pipes and tobacco. I have known such things as a piano, a ton of coal, a pony, and a barrel of beer sent as valentines by well-to-do people; but in these cases, of course, the gifts are forwarded by cart or special messenger, the carrier having no knowledge of the person by whom the present has been sent. But it speedily turns out, in every case, that the giver is discovered, a process which is greatly facilitated by the custom of displaying the valentines, where possible, on tables and sideboards, and submitting them to the inspection of friends, who are sure to look in on the morrow. When it is found that the receiver has omitted to send to this or that person who has forwarded one or other of the presents, St. Valentine's Day proper

becomes the occasion of making the necessary return. This is a goodly custom, and deserves to be perpetuated as a kindly expression of friendly feeling. These gifts are frequently a source of considerable merriment. For instance, all sorts of surprises are sufficiently common, one of them being the wrapping and stringing up of numerous parcels, one inside the other, with some jocular phrase written upon each, such as "Be careful, or it will break," "Don't be in a hurry," "Patience is a virtue," and so on, until when the last piece of paper has been undone nothing is left but some article of trivial value, or some funny motto. Sometimes a piece of string is attached to the parcel, which is jerked away as the would-be recipient stoops to take it up. These and similar things are, of course, only done by friends, and always serve to create a hearty laugh.

### LORD BURY ON A POLITICAL CANVASS.

Among other things which live in my recollection of Norfolk doings is a parliamentary contest, in which Lord Bury, afterwards Earl of Albemarle, was a conspicuous figure, his colleague in the

Liberal interest being Mr. Schneider. The Liberal colours there are blue and white, those of the Tory party being purple and orange. There was, and I believe still is, a Liberal party tune used on election occasions, the first line of the vocal part being, "Hurrah for the Whites and Blues," and the accompaniment is always well dinned into the ears of the populace by the "blue and white bands" which parade the city. While the electoral contest I speak of was proceeding, I was one day standing at the door of the *Norwich Mercury* office, chatting with the proprietor of that paper, Mr. R. N. Bacon, when the then Lord Hastings came up and entered into conversation with my chief, just at the time a brass band came along playing the well-known Liberal air. As the musicians passed by I heard Lord Hastings say, alluding to the expenditure entailed on his family by the support they had given to the Whig interest in that somewhat corrupt city for several generations, "Damn the Whites and Blues; that tune has cost my people more than thirty thousand pounds!" Party feeling at that time had risen to the boiling point, and scrimmages of a

more or less serious character took place when the Blues and Whites chanced to meet their opponents in their daily perambulations.

### HIS LORDSHIP THRASHES A BUTCHER.

On one occasion Lord Bury, in the prosecution of his canvass, having to pass through a somewhat doubtful suburb, deemed it prudent to engage the protectional services of a well-known Norwich pugilist, named Mace, commonly known among the votaries of the ring as "Jem." I can only describe what happened from hearsay, as I did not witness what occurred, but the story speedily spread through the city, and I never heard it contradicted. It was stated that his lordship and his pugilistic companion were driving in a dogcart along Ber Street, stopping occasionally to solicit votes. About half-way up the road they had to pass a court, in the entrance to which two butchers were posted. One of these threw a dead kitten, which struck Lord Bury on the chest. The dogcart was instantly stopped, and his lordship, followed by Mace, jumped down. The Viscount went straight for the man who

had committed the assault. Lord Bury was a man of good physique, and was reputed to have learnt a little of the art of self-defence at college. He at once tackled his assailant, whose friend, the other butcher, simply looked on, probably afraid of interfering, because of the certainty that Mace, who was well known to everybody in Norwich, and would have been an awkward man to deal with, was looking after the Viscount's interests. The little sparring match between Lord Bury and his antagonist did not last long, and while the Liberal candidate was administering severe punishment to his foe, all that was heard from Mace was the advice, "A little more up with your left, my lord!" After the beaten man had wiped the blood from his face, he turned to Lord Bury, saying, "I didn't know your lordship was so good with your fists. You've given me quite enough, and I admire your pluck. I'm a freeman of the city, and I'm blest if you shan't have my vote!" "So he shall mine," said the other butcher, also a freeman, and, speaking subsequently of the adventure, Lord Bury is reported to have said to his committee, "You see that I have had to fight for two of my votes!"

## THE BEGINNING OF THE VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT.

While still at Norwich, I was one of the first to take advantage of the opportunity offered to civilians, by the inauguration of the Volunteer movement, of learning something about military matters. I had often felt myself considerably at a loss when attending military displays, such as used to take place on notable public occasions, including the Queen's birthday, when reviews and other ceremonial parades were held. Having no technical knowledge of the nature or object of the manœuvres through which the soldiery were put, it was necessary to wait upon some officer, from whom intelligence might be gleaned, as to the movements gone through; and sometimes the information was very difficult to obtain. I therefore decided on joining one of the first formed city companies with a view to the acquisition of at least sufficient insight into the mysteries of military evolutions to enable me, in future, to dispense with the necessity of waiting on some colonel or adjutant who might, or might not, enlighten my ignorance. I consequently

joined No. 3 Company, in which I was duly instructed in the drill and duties of a private soldier, while in order to arrive at more extended information I purchased what was known as the "Red Book," and bestowed a good deal of time on its conscientious study, with the result that in a year or two I could have put our Norwich battalion through the whole of the evolutions which in those days were taught to volunteers. At that time there was no Government grant, and those who joined the movement had to purchase their own uniforms and rifles, which involved an appreciable expenditure. I am glad to be enabled to say that what I then learnt came in very serviceably on subsequent occasions, because when I afterwards joined the London Press, one of the first military displays I was sent to, apart from duties I had to perform in Parliament, was an Easter Monday review, which in the sixties involved massing together, in so many brigades, the whole of the volunteer regiments available for the purpose, instead of manœuvring the corps separately in different parts of the country, as is now the case. The review I now refer to took place at Portsmouth in 1866, soon

after I had accepted an engagement on the staff of the *Morning Post*, and, having a pass between the lines of supposed enemies and defenders, I was able to take note of the whole of the proceedings, and, subsequently, without having to ask for information from a military expert, to write a descriptive account of something like three columns. Subsequently, during a parliamentary recess, I acted as special correspondent for the *Glasgow Herald*, at the Cannock Chase Autumn Manœuvres, and was not only able to describe everything worth recording without military assistance, but occasionally indulged in a certain amount of criticism, when evident mistakes were made by one or other of the officers in command. All this, I think, points to the advantage it is to a journalist to learn as much as he can of everything he may at any time be called upon to write about; indeed, I think there is nothing he can acquire, good, bad, or indifferent, that is not likely at some time or other to be of service to him.

### HOW SOME RACES ARE RUN.

During my Norwich work I had, among other things, to do a little in

the way of describing sporting and athletic exhibitions. In this regard there is but one incident occurring to my recollection that I think worthy of mention, and that only because it furnishes an instance of the questionable things which are sometimes done under the name of sport. A ten-mile running match had been announced between an Indian, known as Deerfoot, who had just been making a sensation in the athletic world, and a local celebrity who was familiarily known as the "Norwich Milkboy," and whose real name I have forgotten. I witnessed the match and need do no more than describe the finish. In the last lap the Indian was about half a round ahead, when, to the surprise of every spectator, the Milkboy, with a remarkable spurt, ran almost up to him, and undoubtedly could have won had there been a few yards more to cover. The Indian's time was nothing like equal to that in which the same distance has been run by many English athletes, but he was allowed to win because to have failed would have been fatal to his prestige, and a serious loss to his manager and agents.

### A WATERSPOUT IN THE YARE VALLEY.

Down the valley of the Yare, less than half-way between Norwich and Yarmouth, I once witnessed a sight which, though not uncommon in the tropics, is seldom seen in this country. I had been sent to a regatta in which yachts, wherries, and outriggers took part, and just before the close of the afternoon I, in common with the other spectators, had my attention drawn to what, at first, looked like an exceedingly dense and singularly shaped cloud, which was making its way above the river line from an easterly direction. Presently it assumed the form of a funnel, revolving with a spiral action, as it careered above the heads of the holiday makers, until finally, when it had advanced a few hundred yards farther, it burst over some cornfields, causing the destruction of many acres of ripening wheat. It was the first time any of us had seen a waterspout, and we were all thankful that we had escaped a certain drenching, and possibly more severe consequences.

### A NORWICH HOAX.

While still on the *Norwich Mercury* I

had to record a hoax that was got up by certain of the young blades there, which created a sort of sensation for the time being. An advertisement was inserted in a newspaper stating that a lady of means and position, residing in Norwich, was desirous of securing a husband occupying a good social position. This led to an answer from a person calling himself Rogers, who stated that he possessed the requisite qualifications, and moreover sent his photograph. This individual, who had been selected from a number of other applicants, received a letter from "Miss Panks," the name conferred on a female whom the conspirators were supposed to have enlisted in carrying out the plot, appointing a meeting in the Chapel Field, a small but pretty park near the centre of the city, the lady promising to obviate any difficulty as to her identity by wearing a certain costume, while the would-be bridegroom was to wear a crimson peony in his button-hole. At the appointed time the gentleman made his appearance with the stipulated floral signal conspicuously displayed. As he paced the walk which had been indicated in the correspondence, a considerable number



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of citizens, most of whom were in the secret, appeared on the promenades, and when a sufficient length of time was supposed to have elapsed, a placard, printed in four-inch letters, was pasted on the trunk of a large elm, just as the victim had turned his back on the tree, announcing, to his evident horror, when another turn brought it into view, "Rogers is come; but where is Panks?" The moment he set eyes on the placard the object of the hoax tore the peony from his button-hole, made a rapid bolt out of the field to an adjacent cabstand, and drove off with as much celerity as a Norwich cabhorse could ensure. Nothing came of this unusual kind of practical joke, but if its perpetrators had been aware that they might have been subject to an indictment for conspiracy, as a sequel to their afternoon's amusement, it is more than likely that the deception they had taken part in would have been left unrecorded.

## LORD CHIEF JUSTICE COCKBURN.

Probably there have been few, if any, of our judges who have possessed in so marvellous a degree the faculty of

memory as the late Lord Chief Justice Cockburn. I recollect his presiding over the Nisi Prius Court at a Norwich Assize in a heavy case arising out of a great inundation near Lynn. The trial lasted about a week, and numerous witnesses were examined on both sides. When it came to the judge's summing up, his lordship, who had taken voluminous notes all through—by the way, I believe his notes were taken in shorthand—began by briefly stating the points put forward by the litigants *pro* and *con*. He next proceeded to summarise the evidence given by the different witnesses, only referring to his notes for their respective names; but in one instance, abandoning the effort to retail the points from memory, he said: "And now, gentlemen, I come to the statement of one of the witnesses which struck me as being so remarkable that I think I ought to read it to you as I took it down." After turning over his notes for some time, the Chief Justice found what he wanted, and, having read what he deemed necessary, proceeded with his summing up, which, although the trial had lasted so long, only occupied some three or four hours. This was a feat which it would

not be easy to rival, and certainly difficult to surpass.

At this assize I was seated with the bar in the well of the court, and while a case, not worth a report, was going on I was somewhat thoughtlessly occupied in folding and cutting a piece of paper so as to give it the appearance of a box, such as children used to make in my younger days, and used as fly-cages. When the little box was completed Mr. Keane, Q.C., the then leader of the Norfolk bar, took it up and began to examine it with some interest, and while he was doing so the Lord Chief Justice caught sight of it, and asked the learned counsel to hand it to him, which of course was done. Whether it had awakened some childish recollection in his lordship's mind I cannot say; but, at any rate, after looking carefully at it and ascertaining how it opened, he placed it upon his desk, with a nod to me, which evidently meant, "I mean to keep it."

### AN EASTERN COUNTY'S FAIR—THRILLING SCENE.

In Norwich, during my time, there was an annual Christmas fair, not only of an

agricultural, but also of a miscellaneous character, including a wild-beast show, a peripatetic theatre, long rows of gingerbread and toy stalls, swings, roundabouts and sparring-booths, together with a number of other inducements calculated to amuse the citizens and to ease their purses of as much superfluous cash as they were willing to expend. In fact, it was a motley gathering, consisting of all sorts of out-of-the-way people and things never brought within a single focus save at such carnivals as these, and reminded me strongly of what I had seen at Smithfield and Greenwich in my earliest days, when the public used to be treated to the time-honoured but noisy festivals which have fortunately been consigned, as far as the metropolis and most of the larger provincial towns are concerned, to the memories of long ago.

Having to write some account of these periodical invasions of our usually dull and decorous city, I remember on one occasion, when paying a visit to Wombwell's Menagerie, I witnessed a particularly exciting scene, which all but terminated in a tragedy. A negro named Macomo, a powerfully-built and daring lion-tamer, was exhibiting in a large

caravan, wherein he made a number of animals—lions, tigers and leopards—go through a series of performances, in which they did a variety of tricks, such as perching on high brackets, leaping through fiery hoops, lying down at the word of command, and walking, trotting and galloping round the van in what the showman called "a hunt." While these things were going on I noticed one young lion, which was only just beginning to attain its full growth, and which occasionally refused to obey orders, snarling viciously at the black when struck by his leathern whip, and making furtively towards the door by which Macomo entered and left the cage. Here it lay until the lion-tamer had completed the performance and was about to quit the van. As he approached the door the beast, with ears thrown back and eyes glaring with an unmistakable expression of ferocity and hatred, sprang at and seized him by the left leg, inserting its teeth through his boot and endeavouring to shake him to the floor. Macomo, however, threw his right leg over the animal's neck, and thus pinning the brute to the ground, beat it on the nose with his clenched fist, having no other weapon

available, the force of his blows being such as to crush out of all shape several thick silver rings he had on his fingers, and in a few seconds to daze the beast so that it let go its hold and went snuffling about in the sawdust. Then Macomo at once darted through the door, bleeding profusely from his wounds, but nevertheless in other respects safe and sound. I read a few months afterwards that Macomo was killed by this very animal during a performance at Newcastle.

## PARLIAMENT—THE TWO CHAMBERS.

At the beginning of 1866, having become a member of the parliamentary staff of the *Morning Post*, I had my first insight into the business done by our elected and hereditary legislators. Two things that greatly surprised me were the insufficient accommodation afforded by the House of Commons to its members, one half of whom could not find seats during proceedings of more than usual interest and importance, and the miserable acoustics of the upper chamber, which, notwithstanding its architectural beauty and the enormous cost to which it has put the nation, is about the worst

place in the kingdom for the intelligible transmission of sound. Mr. Denison, afterwards Lord Ossington, who always looked dignified and majestic as he walked up the floor of the House, was the then Speaker, and during his régime none of the tumultuous, and occasionally discreditable, scenes that have since occurred in the elective assembly, were ever witnessed. Lord John (afterwards Earl) Russell was Prime Minister in those days; but not very long afterwards being raised to the Peerage, the House of Commons knew him no more.

### LATE SITTINGS OF THE COMMONS.

At this period of parliamentary history there was no such rule as now terminates debate at midnight, except when it is suspended by a special resolution, and members, interested in particular Bills, would frequently keep a debate, or proceedings in committee, going till four, five, six and even seven o'clock in the morning. I remember one morning in the middle of July, when a prolonged sitting was taking place, hearing an hon. member move, the House being then brilliantly illuminated by a cloudless sun,

"that the gas lights be extinguished." The Speaker, saying there was no necessity for such a motion, himself ordered the gas to be turned off, and this being done, the House went on with the business before it, until it was "time to go home with the milk." On hot mornings, when the windows were kept open for ventilation, I have frequently seen sparrows fluttering in and out, maintaining as they did so a continuous twittering, as though in mockery of the loquacious members below.

Some reference to the question of "obstruction," which has of late years been developed into a fine art, may here be permitted. A relative of mine who joined the Gallery a few years before I did says, "At the commencement of my parliamentary career the peculiar tactics adopted by members desirous of obstructing a Bill so as to prevent it being carried into law, were unknown, even counts out were of rare occurrence, although a 'No House' was not infrequent. When there was nothing of importance on the paper, members declined to come down at question time for the sole purpose of badgering ministers. They, therefore, stayed away, so that when the House

assembled and there were not forty members present, the Speaker being unable to take the chair, an adjournment took place the moment four o'clock was reached. One occasion on which there was no House was when a city banquet was given to the Prince of Wales on his recovery from the serious illness he had contracted at Sandringham."

## COUNTS OUT.

The counting out of the House is an ancient and, at times, a useful institution. In order to prevent possible abuse by some important Act being done by a mere handful of members, anxious to promote some special scheme of their own, the House of Commons wisely resolved, at a period remote from these enlightened days, that if the attention of the Speaker was called to the fact that there were fewer than forty members present, and if the Speaker should find that, inclusive of himself, there were not forty members in attendance, he should then and there adjourn the House. This rule has given rise to incidents of a more or less amusing character. Frequently on private members' nights—or on other nights—when

the Government whips do not take care to keep a House, when the motions on the agenda are of little interest, and some well-known bore is taking precedence on a peculiarly tiresome "fad" of his own, whereon he is sure to descant for Heaven knows how long, one or other of the members, desirous of getting away to his club or his home, will call attention to the fact that there are not forty members present, and the Speaker proceeds to count.

The usual method of obtaining this result is for the member proposing the count to go behind the Speaker's chair, and simply whisper the fact, because, as a rule, those who desire to make this suggestion in a quiet and unobtrusive way are generally anxious to avoid the odious charge which, were they to do so more publicly, might cause it to be hinted to their constituents that they had been thwarting or delaying the business of the House. Some members, however—notably the late Mr. Biggar—are not averse to rising in their places and moving that the House be counted, while there have been occasions on which a member, while speaking in a thin House, has, in deprecation of the want of interest

displayed in the question he was bringing forward, inadvertently referred to the number of his auditors, and this has brought upon himself a count that has been fatal to his further progress. Such a fate befell the late Mr. Bousfield Ferrand, as he was speaking on a motion about water supply, one night in the sixties, during Lord Russell's administration. While the hon. gentleman was indulging in a long and pompous harangue the House was seen to be gradually melting away, until at length the sole occupants of the legislative chamber were the Speaker (Mr. Denison), Mr. Milner Gibson, who was seated on the Treasury bench, Mr. Ferrand himself, the clerks at the table, and the Sergeant-at-Arms, Lord Charles Russell. All at once it dawned on the mind of the deserted member that the Government, and the Liberal party generally, were treating a question of overwhelming importance with culpable disrespect, and, in a burst of eloquent indignation, the hon. gentleman, who spoke from the front Opposition bench, turned to what he imagined to be the well-filled benches of the Conservative party behind him with a half-pronounced appeal against such scurvy treatment, when, to his

evident amazement, he found there was not a single occupant to whom his remonstrance could be addressed. Abruptly closing an unfinished sentence, Mr. Ferrand brought his clenched fist down on a despatch box in front of him, with a bang that startled the Sergeant-at-Arms, who had been peacefully slumbering in his softly-padded chair, and shouted in a voice of thunder to the astonished Speaker, "I move, sir, that this House be counted!" And counted it was, a quorum speedily sallying in, as the Government had some business on the paper subsequent to Mr. Ferrand's motion. Upon this the hon. gentleman essayed to renew his address, but the Speaker at once stopped him, calling "Order! order! The hon. member concluded with a motion," on which Mr. Ferrand, the unconscious instrument of his own annihilation, had to resume his seat.

Mr. Thomas Collins, a former member for the borough of Boston, was one who, like Mr. Biggar, rejoiced in the distinction of being the author of numerous counts. The counting he initiated was the result of a systematic method. He invariably seized the most favourable moment for

effecting his purpose, and in his time the Speaker had not invented the odious plan of turning the division glass and so allowing a three minutes' interval to elapse before the counting commenced, a measure which has proved to be the death-blow of many well-meant endeavours, which at an earlier period would have been assured successes. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, who preceded Mr. Denison as Speaker, used at once to call "Order!" and begin counting the moment it was intimated to him that a quorum was not present, and there were occasions when the business was unconscionably dreary, when the right hon. gentleman seemed to count a little faster than usual, as members filtered through the doorways in sufficient numbers to render the hope of getting away somewhat doubtful. Mr. Collins was generally spoken of by the scribes in the Press Gallery as "Tom," the diminutive being used as a term of endearment, on account of the numerous half-holidays he had conferred on the fraternity, while the sounding title of "Count" Collins was quite as frequently applied to him when the Boston member was referred to in conversation upstairs.

In addition to the case of Mr. Bousfield Ferrand just cited, I may mention that of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy—then Mr. Duffy—one of the political prisoners tried in 1848 along with Mr. O'Connell for high treason. Mr. Duffy had obtained precedence for a specified Tuesday—a day which in his time was always reserved for motions by independent members. Mr. Duffy had a motion relating to some Irish grievance, and the attendance on that occasion was very meagre. Mr. Duffy, who had a formidable pile of papers by his side, opened his remarks somewhat in this manner: "Sir, I have to-night to call the attention of the House to a question of the highest importance to Ireland. Had it been an English or a Scotch question the benches on both sides of the House would have been crowded, but because the motion only relates to poor Ireland I find that there are not twenty members in attendance." "Order, order!" interposed the Speaker; for Mr. Duffy had unwittingly called attention to the fact that there was not a quorum, and in three minutes the House was counted out. Mr. Duffy gathered up his bulky documents, and with the cry of "Who

goes home?" ringing in his ears left the House.

### "WHO GOES HOME?"

Having just referred to the cry, "Who goes home?" which nightly resounds through the rooms and corridors of the House the moment the motion for adjournment has been carried, I may, at this point, enlighten the reader as to its peculiar meaning. There is a tradition in the Commons, the authority for which I have never had an opportunity of obtaining, that somewhere in the dim vista of "long ago," after the House had adjourned and the Speaker—whoever he was—of that period was wending his way homeward on a dark night, before the era of gas and police constables, he was waylaid by some prowling ruffians who ill-treated and robbed him. This circumstance, coming to the knowledge of the House, it was arranged that in future, to prevent any outrage of a similar kind, a small party of members should accompany "Mr. Speaker" as a bodyguard, and whenever the House was adjourned the call went forth, as it is now heard, "Who goes home?" a

custom which is still observed, although the necessity for it has long since passed away.

MR. BRADLAUGH.

It was my lot to be present at the various scenes which took place from time to time after the House had refused, in the first instance, to allow Mr. Bradlaugh, then newly-elected as one of the representatives of the borough of Northampton, to affirm. I heard and reported the fiery speech he made at the bar of the House when demanding what he emphatically declared to be his rights as a duly elected member, with no charge against him but that which arose out of his speeches, lectures, and publications on religious questions. There was a full House at the time, and Mr. Bradlaugh, whose declamation was well suited to the position in which he stood, was listened to with profound attention. It is notable that when Mr. Bradlaugh's right to take the oath, which he consented to do, after he had gone back to his constituents and had been re-elected, was called in question, the Speaker (Mr. Brand) was asked whether there was any precedent for interference between a

newly-elected member and his taking the oath. Mr. Brand's reply might and would have settled the whole of this much-vexed question if it had stopped at the negative he gave, "No, there is none." But the Speaker, unfortunately, added that if the hon. member who had risen to object to the administration of the oath had anything to say to the House, he would allow him to do so. The result is, of course, well known. There were a number of debates on the subject, of a more or less heated character, in the representative chamber, and the question was not finally settled until 1886—Mr. Bradlaugh having been originally elected in 1880—when as the free-thinking colleague of Mr. Labouchere he was permitted to take his seat. About two years afterwards the law was altered, so that the difficulty which presented itself in Mr. Bradlaugh's case is not likely to arise again. The view taken by many members of the action of the Speaker in permitting a debate after Mr. Bradlaugh had presented himself to be sworn was confirmed by so great an authority as Mr. Gladstone, who in the course of the debate originated by Sir Stafford Northcote, whose interposition

had prevented the administration of the oath, after it had been tendered to Mr. Bradlaugh by Sir Erskine May, the then Chief Clerk, said he had received a letter from Sir George Grey which he (Mr. Gladstone) evidently endorsed, expressing the opinion that the Speaker ought not to have permitted the opposition that had been offered to the taking of the oath.

## SPYING STRANGERS.

In former days, and down to the time of Mr. Biggar, there was a rule of the House under which the Speaker directed that all strangers must retire if any hon. member drew his attention to their presence by calling out, "I spy strangers." At one time none but members and the recognised officials were permitted within the House, which was an absolutely exclusive chamber, but by degrees the rigidity of this regulation became relaxed, and strangers brought in by members were allowed to hear the debates. Although, however, their presence was to a certain extent tacitly allowed, the House was not unfrequently cleared of visitors when

matters of importance, specially such as related to international and diplomatic questions, were under discussion. But during the last fifty years or so the rule has not, with very few exceptions, been put in force, and, as far as my own experience is concerned during parliamentary engagements covering upwards of thirty years, I can only call to my recollection two or three occasions on which strangers have been espied. There are three galleries which are now devoted to the accommodation of strangers, namely the ordinary gallery, to which, after a ballot in the outer lobby downstairs, the holders of members' admission tickets are admitted; the Speaker's Gallery, devoted to the seating of visitors having tickets from the offices of the Speaker and Sergeant-at-Arms; and the front gallery, for the use of peers and distinguished strangers; but below these, in a portion of the House, on either side of the principal doorway, there are seats for special personages, in one of which I have often seen the King when he was Prince of Wales. The first occasions on which I had to record the espying of strangers were during the

debates which took place on the Bill for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Prevention Act—a measure which, after a number of attempts, was at length carried. Of course, when ordered to retire, all strangers of the masculine sex at once left the House; but not so many of the occupants of the ladies' gallery—strong-minded females whose sympathies were enlisted on behalf of the Bill, and who, as they were not supposed to be present—a fiction maintained by their being placed behind a screen which renders them almost invisible from the House—could not be forcibly removed even after refusing to take notice of the private intimation conveyed by one of the Speaker's messengers, that the debate about to open would doubtless disclose details unfit for the hearing of delicately-minded individuals. Another occasion on which strangers were spied was when the Prince of Wales, now Edward VII., was listening to a debate, and when also, there is but little doubt, the action then taken by Mr. Biggar in securing the departure of visitors was simply aimed at His Royal Highness, who, as a "stranger," had to retire with the rest.

## CREMATION: THE FIRST DEBATE IN THE COMMONS.

The first attempt to initiate legislative action in this country in favour of cremation was by a motion in the House of Commons in the early part of the seventh decade of the last century. Up to that time the few efforts that had been made to introduce this method of disposing of the dead had been confined to the Continent, two cases having occurred in Italy in 1869 and 1870, while another case, that of an English lady, had taken place at Dresden, in Saxony, in 1874. A society which owed its origin to that eminent physician, Sir Henry Thompson, had been formed in England for the purpose of diffusing information on the subject with a view to ultimate legislation on the system, but no practical step had been taken in either House of Parliament, or by any State department associated with the administration of home affairs, to bring the matter to a distinct and definite issue. In the discussion to which I have referred, what has already been accomplished abroad and was then being considered in England was placed, with a certain amount of authority, before the

country but without result; and it was entirely owing to a legal definition given by a distinguished common law judge in a case tried in a Welsh Assize Court in 1884 that, even without the action of Parliament, cremation was made lawful in England. A Welsh "druid," as he was termed, was arrested and tried on a charge of having improperly disposed of the remains of his daughter by having them cremated on an open piece of land among the Welsh hills. Mr. Justice Stephen, who heard the case, held that no legal offence had been committed, and that the accused was perfectly justified in what he had done, inasmuch as it had occasioned nothing in the way of nuisance to other persons.

Not long after this dictum had been given, the first English crematorium was established at Woking, where, as in several other places since, the practice has been regularly pursued, and is, at the present date, assuming growing proportions, the number of deceased persons now annually incinerated being between 2,000 and 3,000. Many of those whose remains have thus been disposed of have occupied prominent positions in the higher walks of life, and the prejudice

with which the new system was at first received seems to be gradually giving way, owing largely, no doubt, to its acceptance by the more intelligent portion of the community. The hon. member who first brought the subject before the House furnished all the up-to-date knowledge on the subject, together with the arguments used in favour of incineration, such as the impossibility of poisoning our springs and wells, or of mixing the atmosphere, which we who live adjacent to scores of cemeteries in most of the larger towns are compelled to breathe, with the dangerous gases arising from putrid bodies; the preservation for the living of land which in populous places is constantly being added to the enormous acreage devoted to the burial of the dead; the elimination from the minds of sensitive people of the morbid feeling that the forms of those they have dearly loved are undergoing a revolting and lingering process of putrefaction, which, it is said, in the case of clay soils such as that of London, may last for thirty or forty years. In illustration of his argument the hon. member took from his pocket and exhibited to those present the purely white and calcined

ashes of a cow, which had been cremated with a view of showing what would be the result if the same process were applied to the bodies of human beings.

## PARLIAMENTARY OBSTRUCTION.

With regard to the modern development of the art of "obstruction" in the House of Commons, the credit, or discredit, of which has been wrongfully laid to the account of the Irish members, I may state that whatever distinction is to be claimed for the transition of a reckless misuse of the forms of the House into a scientific system, belongs, in the first instance to three individuals, one of them Mr. T. Collins, then member for Boston, the others being Mr. Cavendish Bentinck and Mr. James Lowther. Until the fact was abundantly demonstrated no one would have imagined the amount of mischief which three determined men, acting in concert, could accomplish in the way of impeding useful legislation. Mr. Collins was not in Parliament when the Conservatives, with whom he had always acted, returned to power in 1874, and consequently was not promoted to office; but the other two obstructionists

—Mr. Lowther and Mr. Cavendish Bentinck—were rewarded, the first with the post of Chief Secretary for Ireland, and the other with the office of Judge-Advocate General.

But the men who subsequently succeeded in developing obstructive tactics into a really fine art were known and distinguished as the "Fourth Party." They were the late Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, Sir John Gorst, and Mr. Arthur Balfour, the ex-Prime Minister. They were all familiar with the forms and orders of the House, and in the case of any obnoxious measure which they desired to defeat by tiresome and reiterated methods of delay, they knew, perhaps better than most of the ordinary members, how to set about that sort of work. It was their artfully-designed modes of introducing procrastinating amendments, which while keeping within the rules of procedure, retarded indefinitely the progress of a Bill, which taught the Irish Nationalist members how to harass and worry the Government when any measure to which they were strongly opposed was under discussion, and as it is a legal axiom that "A coach and four can be driven through any Act

of Parliament," so it would be an extremely difficult matter to accumulate a body of orders and regulations which, in some way or other, could not be ingeniously evaded.

## WHOLESALE SUSPENSION OF IRISH MEMBERS.

I need hardly refer to the well-known expulsion, in a concrete body, of the Nationalist members for their resolute defiance of the rules of the House, except to mention one of the most amusing incidents of that exciting occasion. Refusing to quit the House when so ordered, unless removed by "superior physical force," the Nationalists who were to be ejected left the House one by one on being approached by the Sergeant-at-Arms and his assistant, with the view of enforcing the Speaker's order. But one of them, a tall powerfully-built man named O'Sullivan, who seemed determined to have a bit of fun before his removal, refused to budge at the instance of the Sergeant and one of the messengers, the former being old and feeble, and the latter a puny-looking individual incapable of much vigorous action. When they came to

him the recalcitrant member merely said: "No, I don't admit that you're superior physical force." When, however, a third official, of more than ordinary proportions, was summoned to the aid of the others, Mr. O'Sullivan smilingly consented to go, and amid some laughter left the House.

### THE LATE MR. KAVANAGH.

I remember the late Mr. Kavanagh's introduction to the Commons, and seeing him sign the parliamentary roll. Mr. Kavanagh was, unfortunately, born with only partially-developed limbs, nevertheless he was able, with the stumps which represented his arms, to take a pen between them and affix his signature to the parchment sheet. He used to be wheeled into the House by his servant in a specially-constructed Bath chair, and would sometimes take part in a debate. As he could not rise to "catch the Speaker's eye," an intimation used to be given by a friend when he desired to speak, and in this way he was called upon. As he was a man of education and intelligence, his utterances were fully up to, if not beyond, the average. It is

said that, notwithstanding his physical infirmity, he frequently rode to hounds, and was by no means averse to a ditch or fence.

## SUSPENSION OF THE HABEAS CORPUS ACT.

In the early part of my parliamentary work I was present at one of the best debates I have ever heard in the House of Commons. It took place on a Saturday, the measure brought forward by the Government being a Bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland. This proposal was made in consequence of the large increase that had taken place in agrarian outrages, which, although more than ordinarily common for some time previously, had multiplied to an extent necessitating the strongest and most vigorous action for the preservation of law and order. That Bill passed both Houses in a single day, although the Queen's signature—Her Majesty being then at Osborne—was not received in the House of Lords until the early hours of the following morning—the first, and I think the only, occasion on which the Royal assent has been

given to an Act of Parliament on a Sunday.

In the Commons debate all the principal statesmen and orators belonging to that assembly spoke. The Irish leaders, including Mr. Butt and The O'Donoghue, took part in the discussion, while the chief members of the Government, Mr. John Bright, and other eminent statesmen gave their reasons for supporting or deprecating the measure. In the Upper House, as a matter of course, the Bill was passed almost as a matter of form, and so in less than twenty-four hours a stringent piece of coercive legislation was imposed on the Irish people.

### MR. DISRAELI AND MR. HORSMAN.

Most of the things worth recording about Mr. Gladstone, Lord Salisbury, and Mr. Disraeli, while engaged in parliamentary work, have been so often and so well said in recent publications that I have little to add respecting them. Of the last-named, however, I may relate an anecdote which I have not seen printed elsewhere. As everybody knows, Mr. Disraeli was at one time termed the

"Sphinx," owing, probably, to the stony rigidity with which, even during an exciting debate, he would sit, with folded arms and outstretched legs, listening to pungent and sometimes virulent attacks on himself or the Ministry wherein, when the Conservatives were in office, he was the dominant partner. However incisive and well-directed the assaults of his opponents, he was hardly ever seen to move a feature or exhibit the slightest symptom of annoyance or irritation.

But on one occasion he showed, to the surprise of everybody present, that he had been touched in a tender place. Mr. Horsman, an accomplished and vigorous debater, who could, when so disposed, mix a good deal of venom with his political utterances, was making an unusually strenuous attack on the then Conservative Administration, of which Mr. Disraeli was a prominent member as leader of the Lower House. Mr. Horsman was speaking from the first seat on the floor of the House next the front Opposition gangway, and as he turned to get a paper from his hat, which he had placed behind him when he rose, he stood for an instant in the gangway, which, although

I have frequently seen it done by other members under similar circumstances without attention being called to it, is "out of order," as anyone standing in the gangway may impede the progress of members to or from their seats. Jumping up with marked precipitancy, Mr. Disraeli said, "Mr. Speaker, I rise to order; the hon. member is standing in the gangway!" Before the Speaker could rise, however, Mr. Horsman stepped quietly back into his place and began to quote from the document he had taken from his hat, and the incident was thus ended.

### MR. BIGGAR.

Everybody has, of course, heard of Mr. Biggar, who, like a much more celebrated character of the present day, was commonly known as "Joe." Blessed with but little oratorical ability, he possessed, as a compensating medium, something more than the usual amount of audacity, or what is vulgarly termed "cheek." One Wednesday, when the House used to rise at six, a custom since transferred to Friday, Mr. Biggar, desiring to defeat a Bill which had been placed first on the orders for that particular day,

spoke throughout the entire sitting, that is to say the "speech" was practically made up by quotations from a bulky Blue book bearing on the question under discussion, the result being that the Bill, having lost its place on the Wednesday's orders, was killed, to the great satisfaction of Mr. Biggar and his friends.

## THE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

After serving four years on the *Morning Post*, I accepted, on its formation, a Gallery engagement as summary writer on the smaller Parliamentary staff of the Press Association, a position I retained for eighteen years. There were then only three members of our corps, and the duties were very different to those of the men engaged on the morning papers. Instead of taking turns, becoming shorter as the evening lengthened, as is the case on the morning journals, we arranged a system by which one man devoted himself to the usually long list of questions put to the Government by private members, frequently exceeding a hundred, while the other two wrote

summaries of what else took place in the two legislative chambers, alternating from one to the other night by night. The summary men, having to write out the points of a debate in longhand as the discussion proceeded, were debarred from taking more than an occasional shorthand note, as on great occasions, such as the discussion of the Irish Church Bill, some measure of political reform, the Irish Land Bill, and so forth, any resort to shorthand would have been fatal to the work, and the summarist had to adopt the most rapid method of condensation of which he was capable. Many a time have my colleagues and I written in one evening three or more columns of an important discussion, and in addition to this a brief résumé of what was given in the lengthy summary. All the reports had to be written in duplicate on thin oiled paper with a blackened sheet between two white ones, the set-off from the blacks showing through the oiled whites. The number of whites required for Post Office telegraph purposes in our case was ten, which involved the pressure of a stylus through fifteen sheets, rather hard work for a long night's debate.

## MR. PLIMSOLL AND THE LOAD-LINE QUESTION.

Perhaps the most striking scene I ever witnessed in the House of Commons was one in which Mr. Samuel Plimsoll, the then member for Derby, was the chief figure. Having in his earlier years experienced the pangs of poverty, he resolved when fortune smiled upon him, and he became possessed of an adequate competence, to do what lay in his power to alleviate the lot of some, at least, of his fellow-creatures whose lives were embittered by exceptional endurance and unnecessary risk and peril. He therefore turned his attention to the condition of our merchant sailors, whose exceptional hardships he described in a book bearing the title of *Our Seamen*. He averred, and in some cases he was supported by pretty strong evidence which seemed to bear out his charges, that it was the practice among a certain class of shipowners to invest in unseaworthy vessels, which they overloaded and insured as heavily as possible, with a view of sending them on rough voyages in the hope that they might go down, regardless of the lives of the men on board, and so enable their owners

to obtain extortionate insurances. This class of vessels obtained the nickname of "Coffin Ships."

During the time Mr. Plimsoll sat for Derby he directed his efforts, in various ways, towards inducing the Government to propose legislation in the direction on which his heart was set, and in 1873 he succeeded in carrying a motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole subject, with a view to some tangible reform, where it might be shown to be needed. The result of this inquiry was that in 1875 a Bill was introduced by Mr. Disraeli's Government, which Mr. Plimsoll expressed himself able to accept, though he thought it ought to have gone further. Towards the end of July, when what is known in parliamentary phraseology as the "Slaughter of the Innocents" was announced—that is, the withdrawal of Bills there is not time to pass—the Bill for protecting our merchant seamen was among the number about to be dropped. Mr. Plimsoll heard the statement with amazement, and, jumping from his seat, began to accuse the Government of a gross breach of faith. He, in fact, speedily worked himself into a furious

passion, and as he protested against the action of the Government in language that was hardly parliamentary, he crossed over from the Opposition benches and shook his fist in the faces of Her Majesty's ministers, calling them "villains," and appearing, as he did so, to be almost foaming at the mouth. Of course such a breach of parliamentary decorum could not be passed over without notice being taken of it by the House, and Mr. Disraeli consequently moved that the hon. member for Derby be reprimanded by Mr. Speaker; but milder counsels presently prevailed, and on the motion of the Marquess of Hartington, a motion was carried adjourning the consideration of the matter for a week, whereby Mr. Plimsoll was allowed time to repent and frame a suitable apology for his flagrant breach of good manners. The result was that Mr. Plimsoll having made the *amende honorable*, a Bill, which satisfied him and his friends for the time being, by fixing a load-line which was not to be exceeded, and putting certain limits to deck cargoes, was passed rapidly through both Houses, and subsequently extended and amended in the following year, when it was incorporated in the Merchant Shipping Act,

and is now part of our permanent shipping law.

Mr. Plimsoll subsequently resigned his seat in favour of Sir W. Harcourt, who had been rejected by the borough of Oxford, and who, he believed, as Home Secretary, would be enabled to do much more to better the condition of our merchant seamen than could be possibly accomplished by anyone outside the Government.

### MR. JAMES MERRY, M.P.

During the time I was assisting the *Scotsman* in the election business of 1868, one of the meetings I had to attend was a gathering of the constituents of Mr. James Merry, who was better known at that time, especially on the turf, of which he was an enthusiastic supporter, as "Jemmy." He was member for one of the Scottish boroughs—I think, Linlithgow—and probably owed his seat more to his racing proclivities than to his knowledge of politics. Everybody knows how a Scotch constituency loves to pester its parliamentary candidates with questions—a process familiarly designated as "heckling." When "Jemmy" had

made his opening speech, the heckling at once commenced, and the sporting candidate was examined and cross-examined on a long list of political subjects, recent and prospective, his answers to which gave more or less satisfaction to his audience. At length a serious member of the ultra-Sabbatarian confraternity—a strenuous opponent of Merry's—fired his last and heaviest shot in this wise: "Of course ye are aware that most of the principal horse racing in France takes place on the Sabbath?" "Yes," replied Merry, "that has long been the custom on the French turf." "And you have run horses of your own in French races?" Once more the answer was in the affirmative, and at this many of the voters gravely shook their heads. "And," continued the merciless questioner, "had ye no, a while sin', a celebrated horse in one of the principal races that are run on the Sabbath day?" "That is so," pluckily replied the sportive candidate; "but then, you know, he won the chief prize." This answer, instead of being received as I had anticipated, with a wail of horror, was responded to by vigorous applause, which not only drowned the moanings of the "unco guid," but put

an end to heckling on this particular subject. Perhaps it would not be amiss, at this juncture, to repeat a story I heard about this time anent the same individual. Merry, it is said, was returning from a Scotch race meeting in company with a sporting friend, who, like many others of the same kidney, was not particular as to the use of strong expletives. Merry tolerated his companion's language while the two were alone, but when two gentlemen, one of whom was in clerical garb, got into their compartment at a half-way station, and the spicy utterances of his friend were renewed, the sporting M.P. thought it right to administer a salutary rebuke. "Oh," said the other, "you 're a pretty fellow to talk to me like a parson. I 'll bet you a pony (£25) that you can't say the Lord's Prayer." "Done," said Merry, and there and then each produced five and twenty pounds in bank-notes, which the non-clerical gentleman consented to hold until the bet was decided. Thereupon Merry began glibly enough to recite, not the Lord's Prayer, but the Athanasian Creed, and had only got through a few lines, when his friend called out, "That 'll do; give him the notes, sir, but upon

my word I didn't think he could say it."

MR. DISRAELI IN DANGER.

I was witness on one occasion to what might have been a serious accident to Mr. Disraeli, who at that time was Prime Minister. The weather was cold, and everybody was clad in his warmest garments. Mr. Disraeli wore a long, grey ulster, which enveloped him from neck to foot, and as he was making his way from the House of Commons, across the end of Parliament Street, he paused for a moment to let an omnibus go by, and then, not having seen a carriage that was following the public vehicle within a few feet, essayed to gain the other side. At that time there were no police regulations for safeguarding the foot and vehicular traffic such as are now in force, not only in Westminster, but at nearly all the great cross thoroughfares of the metropolis. But the quick eye of the Premier saved him. With a long, agile step, and avoiding the carriage horses by the merest shave, Mr. Disraeli reached the opposite pavement, and the world was saved the horror of a great political fatality. I am thankful to say

that I and the handful of other people in the immediate neighbourhood were spared the necessity of giving evidence in what might have been a national calamity.

### MR. ROBERT LOWE, AFTERWARDS LORD SHERBROOKE.

I have a distinct recollection of the late Lord Sherbrooke, formerly Mr. Robert Lowe, and, while in the House of Commons, familiarly known as "Bob" or "Bobby." He was an albino, having white hair and pink eyes, the latter being so weak that in order to read from a book or newspaper, or even from his written notes, he was obliged to hold the print or manuscript within a few inches of his nose; and on one occasion, having necessity to refer to a page of his previously-prepared speech, he managed to get the sheets into such confusion that, after shuffling them about for a minute or so, he gave up the effort, and, abandoning the remainder of what seemed likely to be one of his great orations, he suddenly resumed his seat, and the rest was lost to the House and country. Something of a similar kind

happened one evening after he had been raised to the peerage, when he was endeavouring to address the House of Lords; his memory failed him, and what would probably have been an intellectual treat was denied to the expectant assembly. Before he left the Commons he accepted and held for some time the important post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in subsequent days he used to pride himself on the fact that while in that position he had saved the country something like twelve millions per annum. When he had passed his seventieth year he learned to ride a bicycle, and it is related of him that on one occasion he accidentally ran against a butcher, who was hurt in the collision, and to whom he gave a money compensation. Whether in consequence of the accident or from some other cause I know not, but the butcher became demented, and drowned himself in a deep pool, leaving, it is said, on the bank a scrap of paper on which he had written, "This is all along of Bob Lo." One of Mr. Lowe's proposals during his Chancellorship excited so much opposition and ridicule, both in Parliament and throughout the country, that it had

to be withdrawn. This was a tax of one halfpenny per box on lucifer matches, which were to bear the Latin inscription, *Ex luce lucellum.* Had the tax been imposed it would, even at that time, have raised a large sum; but nowadays, when foreign-made matches which ignite on the box are sold at three-halfpence per dozen, it would not only have brought in an enormous revenue, but would have been so obviously out of proportion to the prime value of the material, that it would have been unique as the most extraordinary anomaly ever known in fiscal legislation.

### MR. JOSEPH COWEN, M.P.

The election in 1874 of Mr. Joseph Cowen, proprietor of the *Newcastle Chronicle*, as member for the borough in which his paper was published, added undoubtedly to the oratorical and intellectual capacity of the House. His first utterances in the representative assembly stamped him as an unusually eloquent, earnest, and uncompromising politician. However thin the House, even at the dinner-hour, when vacant benches are numerous on both sides, the blank spaces

were speedily filled as soon as it became known that he was upon his legs. No one cared to miss the oratorical treat which Mr. Cowen invariably furnished, although, owing to the strong Northumbrian dialect in which his speeches were delivered, especially when he desired to give more than usual emphasis to his most pointed sentences, there were some of his hearers not conversant with the northern pronunciation who failed to grasp his full meaning. I remember on one occasion on which I had taken a verbatim note of an exceedingly eloquent and impassioned speech of his, several of my confrères, who were not thoroughly up to the Newcastle burr, in which the letter "r" is sounded something like the letter "w," came to the table where I was transcribing my shorthand in order to write out with me, so that they might supply a series of lost sentences. As I had lived in Sunderland, and knew the dialect which is pretty much like that of Northumberland, I was, of course, able to assist my colleagues, and the speech, consequently, appeared without curtailment in all the morning papers. Mr. Cowen was a man of sturdy independence, not always agreeing with

measures put forward by his own party, a supporter of Mr. Disraeli's foreign policy, and opposed to Mr. Gladstone's concession to the Boers. Indeed, his independent action was resented by many of his quondam Radical friends, and at his second election, which, however, had a triumphant issue, he had to fight against a good deal of Liberal opposition. As I had personal relations with him, having started and for some time managed his special London wire, I can state that in business matters he would rather have erred on the side of extreme generosity than have left himself open to the suspicion of being stingy or mean. His instruction to me about money matters was this, "Always be liberal, but never extravagant."

### ODDITIES OF SPEECH ON THE PART OF MEMBERS.

As a first-class specimen of the "Fine old English gentleman" there were few men, either in the House of Commons or out of it, who could take precedence of Sir Walter Barttelot. As an old soldier he used to take part in military debates with an emphasis which afforded

abundant proof that he had the fullest belief in every word he uttered, while all who listened to him must have been convinced of his absolute sincerity. There was one particular phrase which Sir Walter was apt to repeat at least a score of times in the course of a half hour's speech. For instance, he would probably begin by saying, "Mr. Speaker, I am one of those who differ from the view taken by the promoters of this scheme," and after the next few sentences he would exclaim, "I am not, however, one of those who oppose the proposal on the grounds stated by the hon. member who last addressed the House." And so, always ringing the changes, at short intervals, on being "one of those" or "not one of those" he would enunciate, to the end, the opinions he had on the subject in hand. One of the most eminent members of the House who had a distinguished position on the Treasury bench, was afflicted with what his hearers regarded as a somewhat painful infirmity, that of stuttering, which used to deprive what otherwise would have been a delightful and eloquent harangue of much of its symmetry and euphony. In other cases—not always those of men

who had not had the advantage of a first-class education—the letter "h" has been grievously maltreated, sometimes by forcible aspiration when it should have been silent, and sometimes by its suppression from words in which the genius of our language demands its insertion. On one occasion when an hon. member, whose name began with the much abused letter, had obtained leave to introduce a Bill, he was asked by the Speaker to give the names of those by whom it was backed, and his reply was as follows:—"The *H*on. *H*algerton *H*egerton and Mr. A—," in the latter case leaving the "h" which ought to have commenced the name as silent as the vowel which took its place. In another instance an hon. member spoke of the British workman as the "'orny 'anded son of toil." These little laches are, however, never taken notice of by the House, even to the extent of raising a smile, and I have often wondered whether the perpetrators of such assaults on the King's English have been conscious of what is so obvious to others. The sort of bull, or false metaphor, of which an Irish member, Sir Boyle Roche, is said to have been guilty in days long

past, such as this, "Mr. Speaker, I smell a rat, I see him floating in the wind, but I 'll nip him in the bud," has not been altogether unknown in later years. I remember an old and experienced member, who frequently addressed the House, on one occasion saying, "Mr. Speaker, this sort of thing has been going on too long, and it is time we put a spoke in the wheel to stem the torrent." Slips of this kind might be added indefinitely by any one taking the trouble to search for them, but on the whole it may be said they are not very common.

## MEMBERS AND THEIR HATS.

One of the incidents which sometimes create a laugh in the House of Commons is that of an hon. member resuming his seat by sitting on his hat. The hat is used in several ways by hon. members. In the first instance members who desire to take and retain certain places for an entire sitting must enter the House before prayer time, and deposit their chapeaux on the seats marked off upon the benches by metal catches, wherein, after prayers, they can place the tickets which give

them a night's proprietorship of the desired positions. Then if, when the House is being cleared for a division, any member desires to address the Speaker on a point of order, he has to do it seated and with his hat on, which occasionally leads to an amusing difficulty, as he may have left his hat in the dining room, library, or elsewhere, and in that case has to obtain the temporary loan of a hat from some other member, whose Lincoln and Bennett may be too small for him, and will give a grave and reverend senior a laughably rakish appearance, or it may be so much too large, that, after he has pulled it from his nose, he has to balance it on the ridge of his brow, like the boy in the picture who says, "Now I'm grandpa." But the worst use to which a hat can be put is when the hon. member who has just finished a speech and wound up with a studied peroration, forgetting that he has placed his head covering on the seat behind him, drops down upon it, and converts what may have cost a guinea or more into something resembling an accordion. There is a kind of grim satisfaction in any misfortune which befalls a man through an accident to his hat,

especially if it is blown off in the street and he has to follow it through the dust or mud among cabs and omnibuses, one of which will at times stop its progress by the tread of a horse's foot or the rotation of a wheel. I remember, on one occasion, during a high wind, seeing a distinguished member in full chase after his hat at Charing Cross, much to the amusement of the spectators, one of whom, however, managed to stop it with his walking stick, and hand it to its panting owner, not much the worse for its flight along Whitehall.

### A GALLERY FAMILY RECORD.

It may be of some interest to journalistic friends and acquaintances of my own to state a fact relating to my family, the only reason why it is introduced in these reminiscences being that it marks a record in the parliamentary gallery which has never been nearly equalled, and is hardly likely to be beaten. At one period in the late sixties and the early seventies there were no fewer than ten reporters bearing my name engaged in parliamentary work at the same time —five brothers and five sons. There

have been many instances in which two brothers and a few in which three were so employed, while there have been some in which father and son have had seats in the gallery either on the same or on different papers, but there has been none in which ten of the nearest relatives could of themselves make up a sufficient corps to cover all the parliamentary work of a London morning journal. There are still four of these relatives engaged in the same work, and several more who hold journalistic positions outside the parliamentary arena.

### AN EXTRAORDINARY CHARGE.

A good many years ago I was engaged in reporting a very remarkable case which was brought before the Hertford magistrates. At a college in the neighbourhood there were, among the students, an Englishman named Dickens and a young Frenchman, or German, whose name I forget. Dickens made a fearful accusation against the foreigner, asserting that the latter had offered him £500 to go over to Roubaix and murder his (the foreign student's) father and mother. As Dickens persisted in the charge, the

matter necessarily came into the hands of the police, and proceedings were taken against the accused. The case occupied three days in the police court, and ended, as far as the magistrates were concerned, in a committal for trial.

It should be stated that the foreigner had all along denied Dickens's allegation, and there was a general feeling that at the forthcoming assizes it would be disproved. But, strange to say, there was no trial. The accused did not put in an appearance, and his bail was estreated; and, as far as I am aware, nothing further has ever been heard of the case.

### SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD.

The late Sir Frank, then only plain Mr., Lockwood was one of the three Commissioners appointed to inquire into the alleged political corruption of the ancient city of Chester. He was certainly one of the most genial lawyers I ever met, and whenever he could get hold of a good witness, who betrayed the slightest element of wit or humour, Sir Frank would monopolise him, bringing out his best and brightest points, and keeping the court, at times, in a constant

roar by the manner in which he developed oddities and comicalities that would not otherwise have been unearthed. But the future Solicitor-General was at his best when the proceedings were dull, and he had little to do but sketch the most noteworthy of the characters who daily attended the Commission. He was indeed a true artist, and, had he abandoned the law for what he only pursued as a pastime, he would certainly have made his way to the front rank as a caricaturist or general illustrator of passing scenes and events. He regularly brought into court a volume of detachable drawing pages, together with a box of lead pencils and crayons. With these, while to the outer world he appeared to be making notes of the evidence, he would rapidly and cleverly sketch every face and figure presenting any distinct or abnormal peculiarity worthy of transfer to his interesting collection.

On one occasion I found myself the object of his artistic attention, and as a sort of justifiable retaliation, being able to draw a little, I essayed to sketch the sketcher. This, I suppose, must have been obvious to Sir Frank, for on the court adjourning for luncheon he

beckoned me across the hall and asked for my drawing. When I complied he laughed, paid me a compliment, and put my handiwork into his book; but when I suggested that he should give me his drawing of myself in return he shook his head, in a *non possumus* way, and quitted the bench with his increased budget.

Even when in his place in Parliament, or while he was conducting cases in the Law Courts, his ruling passion used to assert itself whenever the opportunity occurred, and I can be corroborated in what I say by those who have sat near him in Parliament and elsewhere, all of whom will admit that his comparatively early death was a loss to law and art alike.

## LORD MONCRIEFF AT ABERDEEN.

The first piece of journalistic work it was my lot to perform in Scotland was at Aberdeen, when I had to report a speech made to his constituents by Mr., afterwards Lord, Moncrieff, who was then Lord Advocate. The speech was made in the early part of the day, and was a long one, filling, when in type, nearly a

page of matter in the *Scotsman*. Having so much to do, I wrote a good portion of my "copy" in the train during the long journey to Edinburgh, and in the evening, in order to expedite the work, I was offered the services of a young compositor who had learned Pitman's system of phonography, at which he was said to be tolerably expert. Halving what remained of my shorthand notes, I dictated about a column to my temporary assistant, and finished the rest myself. In the part I dictated occurred a four-line quotation from Milton, which formed the only break in the otherwise solid report. I remember that when I came to these lines I said to my dictatee, "Be careful to indent this blank verse, with quotation marks, as it is an extract from Milton, our great English poet." I did not stay to see the proof, and to my horror the next morning I saw the opening line of the quotation printed thus—

"Along the *wretched* roof the laughter ran,"

instead of—

"Along the *arched* roof the laughter ran."

This mistake could not have been made

in my stenographic system, in which I use an abbreviated "wr" where necessary, but I am told that in Pitman's method "arched" and "wretched" are written in the same way, hence the blunder. I was chaffed by one of the Aberdeen papers, as an English reporter who had not read his Milton; but even if that were so, I could retort by showing how a roomful of fairly educated Scotchmen denied, until proof was forthcoming, that Sir Walter Scott ever wrote a play.

Staying at an Aberdeen hotel the night before the Moncrieff speech, I was one of a party, mostly consisting of Aberdeen gentlemen, who during a smoking-room conversation on literary matters, naturally said a great deal regarding Scotland's literary lion, Sir Walter Scott. When I modestly ventured to suggest that it was strange, considering the amount of dramatic incident with which many of Scott's novels abound, that he should have made a signal failure with a play which he wrote for Macready, and which was produced at Drury Lane, and damned, an Aberdeen councillor corrected me, saying, "You 're mistaken, sir; Sir Walter never wrote a play," a statement on which others of the company exclaimed, "Hear, hear."

"But," I replied, "I have read the play and concur in the judgment passed upon it." "I'll bet you a bottle of champagne," said the first speaker, "that you cannot name a play which was written by Sir Walter." I of course refused to take a bet on what I knew to be an absolute certainty, and then came the question, "What was the title of the play you speak of?" For an instant my recollection failed me, while round the room came the ominous exclamation, "Ah!" But they were wrong in thinking I was caught, for presently my memory returned, and I told them the play was called *The Doom of Devergoil.* No one had ever heard of the piece, and I said to my principal catechist, "I suppose you have a good library in Aberdeen?" "Certainly, sir, one of the best." "Then," I said, "as I shall be breakfasting here in the morning, you may be able to ascertain, meantime, whether I am right or not." On the following morning my overnight opponent came to me in the breakfast-room, shook hands, and apologised, saying he had just ascertained that Sir Walter Scott had written the play I had mentioned, but that it only appeared in one edition of his works—an edition

that had not had a large sale, and was then out of print. I may now boast that in this way I conquered the Scot on his own ground.

## A VOYAGE TO SCOTLAND.

One Saturday, Parliament having freed me for a time from London work by proroguing on the previous day, I gratefully shook the dust of the metropolis from my feet and, bent on some journalistic work in the far north, boarded a General Steam Navigation boat bound for Leith. I was lucky in my ship, which was commanded by one of the most skilful, cautious and genial captains to be found in charge of any English passenger vessel—I refer to Captain Howling, an officer who, I learnt several years ago, while spending a holiday in Edinburgh, had just retired from the position of Commodore of the General Steam Fleet after a service of six-and-thirty years, during which no vessel of which he had had charge had either suffered wreck or sustained any serious accident.

While passing northwards on the Saturday evening we had a clear view of a partial eclipse of the moon, and

on the following day, weather and tide being in our favour, we passed through the Fern Islands on the Northumbrian coast, a spot celebrated by the heroism of Grace Darling, who was instrumental in saving the lives of the crew of the steamer *Forfarshire*, which went to pieces on a rock forming part of the islands during a fearful storm. As we neared the islands I was surprised at witnessing what appeared to be a large number of intermittent fountains, but which I speedily saw from the movement of some of the creatures causing the phenomenon were produced by a large school of whales, which are not often seen in such numbers so far south. One of them, a big fellow, disturbed by the near approach of our steamboat, was seen to throw up the latter half of his carcase within pistol-shot of the vessel as he took a safety plunge into the depths below, and immediately afterwards we lost sight of the lot.

I remember in the early hours of Monday morning, as we steamed near the Bass Rock at the entrance to the Firth of Forth, the captain, in order to rouse the feathered inhabitants of the huge mass of stone, and afford those of

us who had been called on deck a sight of the enormous number of seafowl which roost and breed upon the precipitous island, caused a small brass cannon, kept on board for signalling purposes, to be fired with, to me, a somewhat startling effect. The moment the explosion was heard the air above and around the rock was filled with a countless multitude of gannets which, for a few minutes, had the appearance of a dark cloud suddenly developed under an otherwise clear sky, but as the steamer made her way up the Firth the birds flew back to their haunts and the seeming cloud was visible no more.

## THE CLAIMANT TO THE TICHBORNE TITLE AND ESTATES.

I was present, in a journalistic capacity, during a considerable portion of the trial at Bar of Arthur Orton, commonly known as the "Claimant," by reason of his fraudulent attempt to personate and obtain the title and estates of Sir Roger Tichborne, Bart., a wealthy landowner in Hampshire, who it was as clearly shown as proof could make it, was drowned during the year 1854 in a vessel called

the *Bella*. A brief summary of the initial facts may be of interest to the present generation who cannot remember the sensation, long and continuously maintained, by the audacious proceedings of this monumental impostor. Lady Tichborne, who resided in Paris, where Sir Roger was born in 1829, entertained the fixed delusion that her son had not been drowned, as asserted, although proof of his will was admitted and the insurance paid without demur by the company from whom his policy was obtained. She frequently and extensively advertised for news of the long-lost heir, and it was in consequence of this that the plot was concocted by which Arthur Orton, then going under the name of Castro, working as a butcher at Wagga Wagga, in Australia, resolved to personate the drowned baronet.

Consequently, with funds supplied by Lady Tichborne, he came to England, and had the amazing effrontery to proceed straight to Tichborne House, at Alresford, in Hampshire, and there declare himself the son and heir of Sir James Francis Doughty Tichborne and owner of the family estates. Strange to say, the family solicitor and others were

deluded into the belief that the impostor was what he represented himself to be. Proceeding to Paris, he similarly imposed on Lady Tichborne, although there was not a shade of resemblance between the two men.

Then came the first trial, in which Orton sought to establish in a court of law that he was the lost Sir Roger. But the claim was not made out, although upwards of one hundred witnesses swore to his identity, and, after a hearing of more than one hundred days, his counsel, Serjeant Ballantine, accepted a non-suit. Then came the final act in this extraordinary drama, Orton being tried at Bar for the perjury he had committed and the brazen imposture he had attempted, the trial lasting one hundred and eighty days; and, being convicted, he was sentenced to fourteen years' penal servitude.

Never in the case of any previous pretender were there so many marks of dissimilarity between the real personage and the impostor. The real Sir Roger Tichborne was a spare figure, with black hair and sharp features, while the fraudulent claimant was a mass of unwieldy flesh, weighing five-and-twenty stone, while his hair was light brown. Sir

Roger was educated in France up to the age of seventeen, and spoke and wrote the French language like a Parisian, whereas the claimant did not know a word of French, and could not speak English correctly nor write it grammatically. The dead Tichborne, after leaving France, was sent to Stonyhurst College, in Lancashire, where he necessarily studied Latin and Greek; Orton did not know the difference between the Latin and Greek characters. Sir Roger must have known the names of the Stonyhurst tutors and some of his college companions, and must also have been able to describe the building, with its hall and class rooms; but the claimant knew nothing of either. The Baronet must have known something of the principal buildings in Paris, where he had lived so long; Orton could only describe some that had been erected since the real heir had left France. Sir Roger played chess, and used to practice on the cornet-a-piston; the claimant neither knew the pieces nor the moves on the chess-board, and could not play a note on the other's favourite instrument. Tichborne, after leaving Stonyhurst, took a commission in the 6th Dragoons, and

must have acquired some knowledge of cavalry drill; but Orton knew nothing of regimental duties, and could not give a single word of command. Moreover, the claimant had lived some time at Melipilla, in South America, where it was proved that Sir Roger had never been. There were certain other points of difference, such as tattoo marks on the arm of the Baronet, which were not visible on the arm of the audacious butcher, while it was shown that Orton on his return to England had gone to Wapping and made inquiries about his family, a thing hardly conceivable in the case of the undoubted Sir Roger.

During a portion of the time I was assisting in getting out a report of the proceedings in this remarkable trial I was seated with my back to the bench on which were the three judges, Lord Chief Justice Cockburn and Justices Mellor and Lush; while facing me, on the opposite side of my writing table and just in front of his counsel (Dr. Kenealy), sat the prisoner. It seemed to me, and to most other people, a remarkable fact that, notwithstanding the evidence given at the civil trial and the way in which that case had been disposed of, many

hundreds of persons should still have believed in, and displayed practical sympathy for, this gigantic impostor. Nevertheless, such was the case, as was sufficiently evidenced by the scores of letters that poured in day by day addressed to "Sir Roger Tichborne," as the writers chose to dub the defendant, and containing bank-notes, cheques, and post-office orders, in most cases for appreciable sums. To show how illiterate the recipient was, I may state that in numerous cases where the subscriber's address and signature were badly written—a failing somewhat too common even in the case of certain educated people—the prisoner occasionally handed over the documents for me to decipher, which I used to do, and for which I received many a "Thank you."

At the end of eighteen years' service on the Press Association I received, through the kindness of Mr. W. H. Mudford, the then editor of the *Standard*, an engagement on the annual staff of that paper, which I held, partly as reporter and partly as sub-editor of the evening publication, until the date of my recent retirement. During my association with the evening

paper I had nothing to do with outside work, and therefore have no reminiscences to record of what has happened in the outer world, of which I have had personal cognisance, during the past six or seven years.

## THE "MEGÆRA" COURT MARTIAL.

Going back to some of the events I have been engaged in when not at work in the legislative chambers, I may state that among other things I have attended a number of courts martial of more or less public interest, and of these I select only two cases, which I regard as of more than ordinary importance. They both relate to the loss of ships belonging to the Royal Navy, one being the iron screw transport *Megæra*, and the other the ironclad battleship *Vanguard*. The court martial on the *Megæra* was held at Portsmouth in November, 1871. This ship was beached on the Island of St. Paul, in the Indian Ocean, on the 16th of June in that year, and it was not until the 3rd of the following September that the crew were rescued from their lonely position. The vessel sailed in February, 1871, for Australia, having on board a

complement of four hundred officers and men. On the 8th of June she sprang a leak, which in a short time assumed a serious aspect. A diver was sent down to examine the defective part of the ship's hull, and his report was of a most portentous character. He found that the iron plate, forming a portion of the outer framework, was so far corroded that, to recall his own expression, at the edges of the leak he could bend the decayed iron "like a piece of rusted kettle." It so happened that the leaky part of the vessel was hidden from view by cement in the interior, so that no knowledge of its critical condition could be arrived at by internal examination. Of course, everything that could be done to patch up the dangerous hole was accomplished; but as the leakage continued and the inflow increased from day to day, it was found necessary, for the safety of those on board, to beach the vessel in a somewhat sheltered cove on the island already mentioned. During the early portion of their detention the crew were enabled to procure from the stranded ship a sufficiency of provisions to serve them, under economical management, for a considerable time; and they

also succeeded in conveying ashore materials for constructing tents and making themselves as comfortable as was possible under the circumstances. It unfortunately happened that they were out of the regular track of vessels sailing to India and the Australian Colonies, and they had to make up their minds to the probability of what in reality happened—an isolated existence of some months. One of them, Lieutenant Jones, was lucky enough to be taken on board a Dutch vessel, after being on the island for a period of four weeks, and through the information he was enabled to give, provisions and other things needed for the material comforts of the imprisoned men were furnished by a vessel, called the *Oberon*, on the 26th of August. Eventually, and at some risk, for it was stormy weather at the time, the castaways were rescued from their bleak lot on the 3rd of the following month by the *Malacca*, leaving behind them all the stores and other things they had saved from their own vessel, or which had been supplied by the ships that had come to their relief.

Subsequently, on the officers and crew being brought to England, a court

martial assembled for the trial which invariably takes place in case of wreck or damage to any vessel forming part of the Royal Navy. I well remember the sensation produced by the evidence of the diver who ascertained the rotten and unseaworthy condition of the vessel. How such a ship, which had been reported as unseaworthy, or, at any rate, unfit for service, in 1867, could have escaped the searching examination which should have prevented her being despatched even on a short voyage, and could have been sent on a cruise of sixteen thousand miles, almost passes imagination. That the blundering of so-called naval experts, who permitted her to leave our shores with so precious a cargo, did not end in her being sent to the bottom with all hands, is more like a miracle than most of the lucky escapes that have from time to time been recorded. The result of the trial was the acquittal of Captain Thrupp and his officers of any blame for the mishap to their vessel, the verdict of the court being given on the 17th of November. This, however, was not the end of the matter, for, as the result of a subsequent departmental investigation, Sir Spencer

Robinson and other Admiralty officers were censured in connection with the business by the report of a Government Commission, dated the 6th of March, 1872.

### A THEATRICAL INCIDENT.

I may here relate a singular incident which occurred during my stay at Portsmouth, while the proceedings of the *Megæra* court martial were still in progress. One evening, being at a loss for any other kind of amusement, I repaired to the theatre, where Bulwer Lytton's play, *The Lady of Lyons*, was to be performed by non-commissioned officers of the garrison. The piece was placarded as being under the patronage of the Earl and Countess of Sefton, who with many distinguished friends occupied the two front boxes, which for the occasion had been converted into one. In the box next the stage, immediately adjacent to the one in which I sat, was the sergeant-major of a Scottish regiment which had recently returned from a lengthy sojourn in India. Whether my Scotch neighbour had ever witnessed a dramatic performance before I do not know, but he seemed deeply interested as

the plot became developed. The reader will remember that the motive of the piece hinges upon the attempt of the chief villain, a rich Lyonais named Beauseant, to gratify his desire for revenge on Pauline, the heroine of the drama, in consequence of her rejection of his suit. In the scene wherein Beauseant explains to his friend Glavis his intention to employ as his avenging medium one Claude Melnotte, a gardener's son, who in the guise of and with the suite of an Italian prince is to win and marry the now hated woman, and then to take her to the cottage of his widowed mother, shorn of title and supposed wealth, the villain finishes by saying, "And then I think the haughty beauty would prefer even these arms to those of the gardener's son." This was too much for the Scottish sergeant-major. Leaning over the front of his box, just at the moment when Beauseant had ceased, my military neighbour rasped out, in a deep base voice which could be heard all over the house, "What a b——y scoundrel you must be!" For an instant the scene was ludicrously comical. The ladies in Lord Sefton's box put up their fans to hide their smiles, the gentlemen roared

aloud, and the two actors had to turn their backs to the audience to conceal their merriment.

## THE LOSS OF THE BATTLESHIP "VANGUARD."

The court martial on the *Vanguard* was held at Plymouth on board Her Majesty's ship the *Royal Adelaide*, and, commencing on September 10th, 1875, lasted for many days. The court was presided over by Rear-Admiral Lord John Hay, second in command of the Channel Fleet, the direction given by the Admiralty being that, pursuant to the custom of the Navy, inquiry should be made into the loss of the *Vanguard*, and the court should try Captain Richard Dawkins, her commander, Lieutenants William Crichton and Stuart Hathorn, Navigating Lieutenant James Cambridge Thomas, and the other officers and the ship's company. The points brought out in the inquiry were briefly these. The *Vanguard* was one of a fleet which left Kingstown Harbour on the morning of September 1st, 1875. The vessels composing the fleet were ordered to steam in double line, at two cables length from each

other, with specified revolutions of their screws. The *Iron Duke*, battleship, commanded by Captain Hickley, was to steam in rear of the *Vanguard*. About a quarter to one o'clock the fleet, having left Kingstown at ten, ran into a heavy bank of fog, so thick that some of the witnesses said it was difficult for anyone standing in the waist of the *Vanguard* to see her stem or stern. Captain Dawkins, in the evidence he gave, stated that when the fog bank was entered he gave two separate orders to reduce the speed at which the *Vanguard* was steaming, first to six and then to five knots, he being of opinion that if he had run into some merchant vessel he should have laid himself open to very serious blame. Just as he was about to signal his speed to the *Iron Duke* he ordered the *Vanguard* to be stopped, as he had made out a vessel ahead; but perceiving immediately afterwards that the *Vanguard* was clear of the ship he had sighted, he gave the order "full speed ahead," so as to get well out of the way. Just then he saw abaft the post-beam what he took to be a large merchant vessel, but it proved to be the *Iron Duke*, which in a few moments

struck the *Vanguard* just behind the main rigging. At that time the *Vanguard* was going at six knots through the water.

According to the account given by Lieutenant Evans, officer of the watch on board the *Iron Duke* at the time of the collision, he, knowing the speed at which the *Vanguard* was steaming, and that the speed of the *Iron Duke* had been increased, was of opinion that in the fog which then prevailed the latter would be safer one point, or nearly one point, on the *Vanguard's* port quarter than directly astern, and he consequently gave the quartermaster the order to give the *Iron Duke* a good sheer-out to avoid her next ahead. But while this divergence was being made he received the captain's order to put his ship back into her course, and this direction being obeyed the collision between her and the *Vanguard* took place. The result was that the ram of the *Iron Duke* made an enormous hole in the side of the *Vanguard*, which there were no means of covering by any available material, and there being some difficulty in closing the bulkhead doors or slides, so as to render the compartments water-tight, the water poured in at such a rate that after

floating for an hour and twelve minutes the *Vanguard* sank to the bottom of the Irish Sea, where she still remains, as it was subsequently found that at the depth in which she lay any attempt to raise her was absolutely hopeless. Fortunately there was no difficulty in saving all the officers and crew of the ill-fated vessel, so that a calamitous loss of life, in addition to the loss of a costly ship, was avoided.

The court, among other things, found that the *Vanguard* was sunk by the increase of speed of the *Iron Duke* during a dense fog, by the *Iron Duke* improperly sheering out of the line, by the want of fog signals on board the *Iron Duke*, and by Captain Dawkins not having ordered Captain Hickley of the *Iron Duke* to tow the *Vanguard* into shallow water. The court consequently severely reprimanded Captain Dawkins and dismissed him his ship; they also reprimanded Navigating Lieutenant Thomas for certain faults connected with his share of the unfortunate catastrophe.

### THE OAKS COLLIERY EXPLOSION.

From courts martial to inquests is not always a very wide step, but in the case

of the two naval inquiries I have sketched there was fortunately no loss of life, while in the story I am about to summarise the sacrifice of life was appalling, and, I believe, altogether unparalleled in any similar case in the collieries of this country. I am referring to a double colliery explosion which occurred at the Oaks Colliery, Hoyle Mills, near Barnsley, by which 388 persons perished—360 on December 12th, 1866, and 28 others on the following day. This is probably the greatest calamity of the kind that has ever been recorded as occurring in the same mine and, doubtless, from the same cause. The coal seams in this neighbourhood are regarded as of a particularly fiery character, and probably much of the peril attaching to the working of the mineral was due to the system on which the coal was hewn. The mineral there is worked out in what are termed "goafs," which will be better understood as resembling halls of coal. An open space is first cleared of the coal it contains, the roof meanwhile being propped by timbers, but when the goaf has been worked out the props are knocked away and the roof allowed to fall in, which it gradually does in loose layers, overlapping each other,

but leaving a good many interstices in which, when the goaf is abandoned, coal gas accumulates. Of course the usual methods of ventilation are adopted, but it is difficult to clear out the whole of the gas, and occasionally, during some sudden removal of atmospheric pressure, the dangerous element is released, and if it rushes out in any quantity and encounters a light an explosion occurs. It does not always follow that the mischief is caused by the gas coming in contact with a naked light, as it was amply proved at the inquest, by scientific witnesses, that the gauze of a Davy lamp, when exposed to a large volume of fiery vapour, is so acted upon by the light within, that, if the latter be not extinguished instantly, it will heat the wire until it becomes incandescent and capable of causing an explosion. This was the theory set up by some of the experts in this lamentable case. At any rate, an explosion was caused in some way, and of 360 men and boys in the pit at the time none lived to tell the tale. Next day, while a party of searchers were looking for the bodies of the slain, another explosion, caused probably by smouldering embers from the debris of

the previous day, took place, and on this occasion another 28 lives were sacrificed, only one man escaping.

The inquiry lasted a long time, and many witnesses, experts and working colliers, were examined. When the miners were called upon to give their evidence there might have been a hitch in taking the notes required by the Government, who had sent a shorthand writer down from London to take a full report, but for what I may regard as an accident. The Barnsley working-man speaks an exceedingly pronounced Yorkshire dialect, and I noticed that when the first of the colliers was being examined my friend, Mr. Martin, the Government shorthand writer, looked at him in astonishment, and laid down his pen. Mr. Martin was evidently "all at sea," and, seeing that he was in a quandary, I, who knew the "language," having lived a good deal among Yorkshire people, took a shorthand note on his behalf, with the result that I had to do the evidence of the rest of the Barnsley colliers, while an arrangement was made for doing my London paper work. In the end the jury, as a matter of course, found that the deaths of all the

victims in these fearful occurrences were accidental.

### THE FENIANS IN MANCHESTER—MURDER OF SERGEANT BRETT.

I was present during the whole of the proceedings that took place in Manchester, in the latter part of September, 1867, in connection with the murder of Police-Sergeant Brett by a party of armed Fenians. This officer was shot while guarding the inside door of the prison van in which two noted Fenian leaders—Colonel Kelly and a man named Deasy—were being conveyed to gaol after an examination before the city magistrates. The gaol to which the prisoners were being driven was situated some little distance from Manchester, and the attack upon the van took place at a spot where the road was spanned by a railway arch. Under the command of three determined men, named Allen, Gould and Larkin, the rescue party, concealing themselves as best they could by the roadside, awaited the approach of the van, and the moment it had reached the point selected the horses were seized, and the police by whom

the vehicle was guarded were not only threatened with revolvers, but on making efforts at resistance were fired at, though as far as those outside were concerned without fatal result. Unfortunately this was not so in the case of Sergeant Brett. Allen, the apparent ringleader of the attacking party, mounted the steps at the back of the van, and, pistol in hand, demanded through the barred aperture of the door that the keys should be surrendered. With this demand Brett, who must have realised from the firing going on around the desperate character of the assailants, refused compliance, and Allen, as subsequently deposed to, at once fired a bullet through the lock, smashing the fastenings and killing the brave officer, who had a ball lodged in his brain. The van being thus at the mercy of the Fenian party, Kelly and Deasy were at once released, and under a well-armed escort taken to some place of hiding, whence they were eventually enabled to escape without recapture.

My first acquaintance with what had occurred was within a very short time of the event. I happened to be passing the Manchester Infirmary, and saw some

policemen in the presence of a large crowd carrying Brett's body across the paved yard in front of the building. With the instinct of an experienced journalist, I naturally proceeded at once to the office of the city detective police, and, having ascertained the main facts of the occurrence, at once telegraphed them to the London papers, several of which I was at that time representing in connection with a trades outrages inquiry, which had then been going on for some time in Manchester and other places. I may here add that while at the detective office a somewhat amusing incident occurred. The chief room was full of Manchester detectives, who were busily engaged in discussing the attack on the prison van and the murder of the police-sergeant. While I was there it so happened that the late Inspector Clarke, of London, who was then employed on some Manchester case, looked in. Surprised at seeing so many detective officers gathered together at such a time, he said, "Gentlemen, what are you all doing here?" One of the party answered by asking, "Where should we go?" "Go?" said the Inspector;

"go somewhere. You surely don't expect Kelly and Deasy to come here." This rebuke sufficed to clear the room, and soon afterwards Manchester was being scoured in search of Kelly and Deasy and their rescuers.

It was not long before some of the latter were arrested—the number eventually brought before the magistrates being about thirty, of whom twenty-three were committed for trial. The magisterial proceedings lasted a long time, and were conducted under singular circumstances. The prisoners, who were brought into the city every morning from the gaol in which they were confined, had the vans in which they were driven guarded by strong detachments of cavalry and infantry, with drawn sabres and loaded rifles, supplemented by a numerous force of police, all of whom were armed with fully-charged army revolvers. In the court, also, the strictest precautions were taken against any possible surprise in the way of attempted rescue, numerous armed police being stationed at different points both in and outside the court. All this of course constituted a remarkable scene, especially in connection with an English court of justice. The military part of

the business, morning and afternoon, as the prisoners came and went, formed a popular spectacle, which attracted many thousands of citizens to the line of route.

The trial of the twenty-three prisoners committed by the magistrates was commenced on October 29th, and terminated on November 12th, four of the prisoners being condemned to death by the two judges deputed to hear the several cases.

In arranging the separate trials of different sets of prisoners, it happened that a corporal of marines, an Irishman named Maguire, was put up with the first batch, which included also the three desperadoes Allen, Gould, and Larkin, who, according to the abundant evidence brought against them, were undoubtedly the active leaders of the attack on the prison van. As I had heard the whole of the evidence adduced in the magisterial court, and had carefully watched the demeanour of these four men, I had strong grounds for believing that Maguire was the victim of erroneous identification. Throughout the preliminary proceedings the other three men sat together, Maguire being on the immediate left of the third. Allen, Gould and Larkin were constantly

conversing together, and occasionally inditing notes which were handed to their legal representatives; they never spoke to Maguire, nor did they seem to imply by their demeanour that they knew him. Maguire, in fact, sat silent throughout the many days the examination lasted. He had himself stated when arrested that he supposed it was for a breach of military discipline, in his having discarded his uniform and gone about in mufti, without leave. His was a common type of Irish face, not at all unlike those of some of the other prisoners, and in the confusion occasioned by the murderous attack might easily have been mistaken for that of one of the active participators.

The trial and condemnation of these four men terminated on a Saturday night. On the following day several of the reporters who like myself had been engaged all through the proceedings in both courts dined with me at my lodgings near the Law Courts. Another guest was my friend the late Mr. Williamson, then Chief Superintendent of the detective branch of the Metropolitan Police. In the course of our after-dinner conversation I called attention to the mistake that had been made

in putting Maguire up for trial along with the three undoubted ringleaders in the fatal outrage, remarking that he seemed to have been convicted solely on the ground of being in bad company. Mr. Williamson, who had watched the whole business very keenly, said he quite agreed with me, and put this pertinent question, "Why don't you fellows get up a petition to save an innocent man's life? There are plenty of you here, representing the London Press and most of the chief provincial papers, and I feel sure that a well-signed petition coming from such a source would have far greater effect than a score of the ordinary humanitarian applications so frequently addressed to the Home Secretary." Our reply was that we, like himself, had come to Manchester to perform a duty we owed to our employers, and that we never went outside our recognised functions. "But," said Williamson, "this is not an ordinary case. Here, condemned to death, is a man whom you believe to be innocent, and whose life may be saved by a trivial act on your part. Supposing either of you to be a good swimmer, would you not try to rescue a drowning man if you felt able to do so?" This argument, which

appealed to more than one of us who had been instrumental in saving life under the circumstances suggested, settled the matter, and it was then agreed that we should draw up a petition, with the view of obtaining Maguire's release from his perilous position. The draft of the intended document, briefly setting forth the grounds on which we pressmen were taking so unusual a course, was soon drawn up, and next morning, having transferred it to a presentable sheet, I took it round to the reporters engaged in the trial and obtained six or seven-and-thirty signatures. This was at once forwarded to Mr. Gaythorne Hardy (afterwards Earl of Cranbrook), the then Home Secretary. Meanwhile, however, a paragraph stating what had been done by the reporters appeared in a Manchester newspaper and led to the calling of a town's meeting, at which a petition similar to ours was adopted, and forwarded, likewise, to the proper quarter. The action thus taken was followed by the highly gratifying result that the condemned man received Her Majesty's free pardon and was reinstated in his rank as corporal of marines.

As a sequel to the history of this

remarkable case, I should add what may be regarded as an interesting incident. On his liberation from gaol, Corporal Maguire went about for some time making inquiries for some of those who had started the movement through which his life had been spared. His object was to express his thanks to his benefactors; but I am told that in this he was altogether unsuccessful.

Some years after these events I was in Dublin awaiting a series of Nationalist meetings which had been arranged by the Irish parliamentary leaders, after pursuing a course of lessons in obstructive tactics derived from what was known as the "Fourth Party," referred to elsewhere. From these gentlemen Mr. Parnell and his friends had learnt how the rules of the House of Commons could be broken through, or set at naught, and they had sufficient *nous* to profit by the instruction. As a means of fortifying themselves in their future parliamentary campaigns, they had resolved to stump Ireland with a view to infusing fresh vigour into the action of their compatriots. Mr. Parnell, however, when he came to Dublin, told me that since I had seen him a week or so before the Nationalist members had altered

their plan of operations, and after holding a single meeting in the Rotunda they intended to divert their operations to the principal towns in the North of England, where they hoped to make converts it was unnecessary to ask for in Ireland. In the course of a lengthy conversation I related to Mr. Parnell what I have just recounted regarding the reporters' action in the Manchester affair. He listened with evident interest, and, when I had finished, his whole demeanour seemed to have undergone a change. He rose from his seat on the other side of the table at which we both sat, and warmly shaking my hand, said, "Mr. Bussey, I am more than delighted to have met one of the gentlemen who were instrumental in saving that poor fellow's life."

### A NARROW ESCAPE.

I might add to what I have said about my visit to Dublin on the above occasion that during my stay at Jury's an incident occurred which wellnigh prevented the writing of these memoirs. One Sunday, having been invited to dine with the late Dr. Patten, the then editor of one of the Dublin daily papers, I repaired

on my return to my bedroom, a large apartment having three windows, in order to change my evening dress for every-day costume before going to the smoking-room. As I opened the door I was met by an overpowering smell of gas; but before the dangerous element could reach my candle I had shut the door and blown out the light. This done, I entered the room and threw open the windows to allow the gas to escape; but when I got back to the corridor I was so overcome by the poisonous fumes that I staggered to a window-seat, and remembered nothing more until I was roused by having my shoulder shaken by the chambermaid. She was very frightened when I explained how nearly I had escaped a gas explosion, and begged me to say nothing about the occurrence to Mr. Jury, in whose service she had been for many years, and who she thought would probably discharge her if he were informed of what had taken place. The cause of what so nearly proved a fatal accident, and possibly a serious conflagration, was the carelessness of the woman in neglecting to see that my gas was turned off, as I had left a small jet burning during the night, and when the ordinary supply for the hotel was turned

on at the meter next morning the gas began to fill the closed chamber, and had been pouring into it for a good many hours when I went upstairs. Of course I did not tell the proprietor, but I gave the chambermaid a lecture which I have no doubt she remembered long after the event.

## A CHRISTMAS CATTLE SHOW.

While I was on the *Morning Post* I was once sent to the Agricultural Hall to write a descriptive column or two of a Christmas cattle show. Whatever his chiefs may expect or suppose, the ordinary journalist is not always an "Admirable Crichton," and does not necessarily include in his round of knowledge all the known sciences, with the addition of the subsidiary branches of general intelligence. When he is ordered to deal with some subject of which he is in comparative ignorance the best he can do is to lay hold of some expert who can help him, and that is exactly what happened on the occasion to which I refer.

I was walking listlessly about the show, looking at the different lots of animals on exhibition for the possible prize awards of the judges, when I met an old friend

and confrère—the late Mr. James Mould, of the *Standard*—who, in the course of a brief chat, asked me whether I had any special knowledge of what I had to write about. I candidly confessed that I was quite out of my depth in estimating the good or bad qualities of oxen and other fatted animals, except when, knife and fork in hand, I had their remains before me on the dinner table. "That," said Mr. Mould, "is a pity, because I am afraid you will hardly be able to turn out a good report. Now in my case I am at no disadvantage, as coming from Cornwall, where I had a fair amount of instruction in agricultural matters, I am able to appreciate and write in a technical way about an exhibition of this character." And so we parted.

A few minutes later, however, I came across another old friend, Mr. Clare Sewell Read, then member for one of the divisions of the county of Norfolk, one of the judges at this particular show, an under-secretary, either then or shortly afterwards, of the Agricultural Department of the Government, and perhaps the soundest and best writer in the kingdom on general agricultural subjects. He asked what I was doing

there, and I told him, adding that I was in some difficulty as to how I should be able to fulfil my mission. He smiled and said, "Come with me to the council-room. I have half an hour to spare, and, as I have just been round the show, I will dictate to you quite as much as you will require for your paper." Mr. Read was as good as his word, and at his dictation I took down in shorthand about a column and a half of descriptive matter, which of course duly appeared in the *Morning Post.*

When, shortly afterwards, I again met my friend Mr. Mould, he said, "Bussey, I thought you told me you did not know much about agricultural matters?" "Quite right," I replied; "I never pretended to be an expert in such things." "But how came you to write that article in the *Morning Post?* It was ten times better than mine." My answer was a deprecatory smile; but of course I did not "give myself away."

## IN PARIS DURING THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR.

When the Franco-Prussian War was near its culminating point, a matter of

pressing business took me to Paris. A day or two before I left London I met Mr. Borthwick, now Lord Glenesk, the proprietor of the *Morning Post*, on which I was then engaged, and when I told him whither I was bound he asked me to send some letters descriptive of the state of things in the French capital, which, as he judiciously remarked, would at such a time be of far greater interest than the doings of the *Corps Législatif*, or the dry details of the law courts, which formed the pabulum of the news then being sent over by the Paris correspondent of his newspaper. This I undertook to do, and having received from Mr. Borthwick a letter of introduction to the secretary of Lord Lyons, our then French Ambassador, and having also obtained a passport from Lord Granville, who was at that time our Minister for Foreign Affairs, I took my departure for France on the day after we had received the news of the French surrender at Sedan. I had a few English friends in Paris, and when I told them of the decisive Prussian victory they were greatly surprised, but advised me to keep a quiet tongue about it, as the news had evidently been suppressed by the French Government, who of

course must have heard what had happened, but probably deemed it prudent to withhold the news from the French populace. Paris was at that time in a state of siege, and everybody had to be careful as to what he said or did; so I accepted and acted on the advice of my friends, and said no more about Sedan. As an indication of the condition of Paris at that time, I may state that many of the most popular places in the capital were absolutely closed to the public. This applies to the Louvre, the Invalides, Montmartre, and the Bois de Boulogne, many of the smaller trees in which had been cut down and the stumps pointed, with a view to the possibility of their offering resistance to cavalry.

I was staying at the Hôtel Victoria, in the Rue Favart, opposite the old Opera House, near which Count Orsini threw the bomb intended to assassinate the Emperor Napoleon the Third, and starting from here one night with a friend who was resident in Paris, I had a sort of adventure which afforded me a practical illustration of the condition into which society had been brought, at that peculiar juncture, in the French capital.

We had turned into the Boulevard des Italiens, when my friend said, "Bussey, there is a *mouchard* following you." "Nonsense," I replied; "the state of siege now prevailing must have unhinged your nervous system." "No," he answered, "I am too well known here to be suspected; but you are a stranger, and it is, doubtless, known that during the few days you have stayed here you have been sending letters to a London newspaper, and perhaps some of them have been opened and read." There was, of course, a probability that my friend was right, so I said, "We will put the matter to the test." This we did by crossing two or three times to and from the different sides of the road, and I noticed that whenever we went to one side the so-called *mouchard* walked over to that which we had quitted. Opposite the Madeleine we turned into a café, and when we came out a few minutes afterwards the *mouchard* was still at the spot where he was stationed when we went in. Being now partly convinced that my friend was right, I asked him if he were willing to take a good long walk? "There is nothing I should like better," replied my friend, and off we went. The

result was that after a stroll of some three hours' duration, during which we took an occasional rest outside some café, enjoying a smoke and chat in the cool night air, we went back to my hotel, and as I was ringing the bell for the concierge to open the door and let us in, M. le Mouchard came up to us, bowed to my friend, looked me over from head to foot, though without saying a word, and departed. What all this meant I could not divine until next morning, when I called with my friend of the previous evening at the Hôtel Cosmopolitan, in the Rue Scribe, near the Grand Opera House, which was then being built.

The Cosmopolitan was a favourite rendezvous for certain English and American visitors and residents, and among the company on this occasion were the Duke of Hamilton, an American consul and about a dozen other persons, for the most part votaries of the turf. While we were all engaged in one way or another, in came the commissary of police for the district, accompanied by his secretary, both in the imposing costume of that period, while two gendarmes, also in full uniform

and armed, were stationed outside the door, I suppose to prevent exit or entrance until M. le Commissary had performed the particular function to which he had been deputed. Advancing into the saloon, this magnificent officer raised his cocked hat in recognition of the Duke of Hamilton, then his secretary took down the names of the rest of the visitors, and finally I was examined as to who I was, what I was doing in Paris, and when I intended to return to England. I made frank and truthful replies, produced my passport, and then with a general sweep of the cocked hat the commissary retired. The only reason I can conceive for the *mouchard* and commissary business is that, on returning to London and calling at the office of the *Morning Post*, I found that one of my letters, just previous to the date set down, had never reached its destination, though I am sure I was careful to keep within due bounds, knowing that every letter, especially if addressed to an English journal, was liable to French examination.

It would be difficult to give the reader an adequate idea of the external appearance of Paris at the time of which I

write. All day long, morn, noon and night, the main thoroughfares, in addition to the ordinary traffic, presented what the tourist of the present day would regard as an extraordinary spectacle. From east, west, north and south, day and night, hour by hour, and minute by minute, there was a continuous procession of vehicles of every conceivable kind, conveying the household goods of the country people into the "City of Refuge." On each of the different routes of entry might be seen heavy wagons piled up with furniture, and conveying men, women and children, who doubtless had heard what the Parisians had not, that the French army had surrendered and the Prussians were marching on Paris. Some of the vehicles were drawn by horses, others by oxen or asses, and in numerous cases by men and women, unable, I suppose, to provide any other kind of draught than that of human thews and sinews. This vehicular procession was varied at intervals by regiments of infantry which were being sent to the front, and all the railways running into the capital were monopolised to such an extent by soldiery and army material that it was only by good luck that anyone

wishing to get away from Paris could accomplish his object. The different railway stations presented not only unusual but very remarkable scenes. Outside were piled up in multitudinous lines the arms of the infantry regiments awaiting orders to be sent wheresoever the directors of military movements might deem to be necessary, and inside, under cover of the station roof, lay countless mattresses and bundles of bedding belonging to those of the refugees who were unable to meet even the lowest charges then made for indoor shelter.

Such, at Paris, was the state of things in the beginning of September, 1870. There was still time for the London newspapers to make arrangements for such reports as might possibly be got through from the capital city in the event of Paris being environed by Prussian troops, and I was asked by my editor whether I would stay through the siege. On the matter of terms I was, however, unable to come to a satisfactory arrangement, and so I came home; but had I remained I might have even gone one better than the "Besieged Resident," Mr. Labouchere, one of the then proprietors of the *Daily*

*News*, who in conjunction with that smartest of war correspondents, Mr. Archibald Forbes, raised his paper to the front rank of London journalism as far as this war was concerned. It may be remembered that when Paris was girt with a belt of German steel, when all the railways were closed and the telegraph wires cut, the opportunity afforded by aerial transport in balloons was taken advantage of, and M. Gambetta, who did more than any other man to keep up the heart of the besieged Parisians, and who escaped from Paris in a gaseous vehicle with the view of continuing the resistance still being offered to the over-mastering army of the Prussian King. Gambetta's escape naturally created a run on balloons, and the pent-up residents of Paris, anxious to communicate with their friends in the outside world, were able, when the balloons did not go astray through contrary winds or occasional rifle shots, which pierced the silken covers of the wind-driven messengers, and brought them within reach of the enemy, to make their position known to their friends and relatives far away from the besieged city. Had I remained

I should hardly have lost one of my communications, as I should have written each in a number of duplicates, sending copies of the previous letters along with the later productions, thus multiplying the chances of the complete set falling into friendly hands, and being forwarded in due course to the desired destination. After a detention of several days, awaiting the opportunity of obtaining a place in a passenger train bound for Calais or Boulogne, I was successful in getting away from Paris before all means of egress were closed by the advent of the Prussian army; and, looking back to the hardships endured by those who were not equally fortunate, and who were compelled to pay exorbitant prices for all kinds of animal food, from the equine down to the smaller kinds of domestic animals, I am not sorry that I did not remain to undergo all the horrors of a siege which eventuated in capitulation through the practical starvation of the bulk of the inhabitants.

I revisited the French capital shortly after law and order had been restored by the defeat of the Communists, and was an eye-witness to the terrible results of the uncontrollable savagery of a

maddened Parisian populace. Some of the great public buildings, which had once been the pride of the "gay city," but which had been wrecked and burnt by anarchist and communistic mobs, presented a pitiable spectacle of the grim havoc which may be wrought by the desperate hands of frenzied men. The Napoleon Column in the Place Vendôme lay in five distinct blocks, as it had been pulled down by those whose forefathers had hailed with feelings of almost idol worship the erection of this popular monument, its gilded statue having now been removed, no one knew whither. The Arc de Triomphe, on the side which faces the village of Neuilly, most of the houses in which had been destroyed or damaged by the cannon of the Republican Government in their attempts to quell the revolt, was being patched up and restored where it had been struck by the fragments of stray shells fired into the city from Mount Valerien; and numerous other places within range of the Governmental guns told a sad story of what must have been the state of things in the finest city of the Continent during the period when Communist and Petroleuse had the upper hand.

While referring to this sanguinary episode in comparatively recent French history, when the lives of eminent and well-known citizens were sacrificed by an ignorant and bloodthirsty *canaille*, I may recall the fact that during my first visit to Paris I was present at a Sunday Mass in the Madeleine, at which the Archbishop of Paris, who was afterwards butchered in cold blood by the Communists, who had seized him as a hostage, was the principal celebrant. No one of course could then have anticipated his untimely fate at the hands of his own people, who, had they succeeded in obtaining and keeping the upper hand, would probably have shocked the civilised world with a second Reign of Terror.

I may here state that while the two great continental powers were engaged in the hostilities that cost both, especially France, so much in blood and treasure, in addition to the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, I was specially engaged in cabling to the *New York Herald* the latest telegrams and special reports that appeared each morning in *The Times* and *Daily News*. These papers had given permission to use their special war telegrams on a mere acknowledgment of the source of

information, and I was favoured by both with the earliest copies turned off their printing machines. The cost of cabling what sometimes amounted to a considerable amount of copy, was, of course, very heavy, and the plan I was instructed to adopt was to skeletonise the messages, that is to say, to strike out as many words as possible, while leaving the receiver at New York sufficient to indicate the original form of the telegram. This necessitated going over the matter several times, in order to decide how much could be safely expunged, and of course the result was a considerable saving to the New York paper. One morning, however, one of the three cables then in use was broken, probably by some vessel dragging her anchor, and then, unfortunately, in the attempt to raise and repair the broken ends, a second cable was similarly fouled, so that we were for several days left with only one—that which transmitted the news through Brest. This single cable was speedily found inadequate to convey all the messages put upon it, consequently hour by hour and day by day the cablegrams, which had to take their turns in order of transmission, became more and more

belated, so that at last my messages were being despatched something like four-and-twenty hours after they were handed in. To keep down the number of messages, the cable company began to raise the price of each by so much per word, until before we were brought back to the original scale the charge had risen to as much as thirteen shillings per word, the two syllables, *Times* and *News*, denoting the sources of origin, daily costing twenty-six shillings. One of my cablegrams, sent in the closest skeleton form, cost I am told between £400 and £500. But it was delightful to see how these scanty messages were inflated at the other end, one of, say, two hundred or three hundred words often filling in the *New York Herald* two or three columns of type, a sufficient proof of journalistic skill and ingenuity.

Before quitting the subject of Paris during the war, I might record a little incident in which an old friend of mine, Mr. Burch, a Parisian resident, played a conspicuous and successful part. Mr. Burch was associated with a then well-known firm of turf agents, that of Messrs. Valentine and Wright, who were doing

an extensive business in Paris. Hearing from me while we were breakfasting at the Hôtel Byron one morning that I had, as already stated, a letter of introduction to Lord Lyons's chief secretary, he jumped from his chair, leaving a full plate before him, exclaiming, "Why did you not tell me of this before? We have a valuable racehorse here, which we have failed to get away, and which is worth £3,000. It is sure to be eaten during the expected siege unless we can get a permit from our Ambassador enabling us to remove it to England. Put on your hat—never mind your breakfast—and come with me to the Embassy at once, as it is a matter that admits of no delay." He fumed a little when I insisted on finishing my repast, and went outside and ordered a carriage to convey us to the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, where the Embassy is situate. He had to wait, however, till I had satisfied the inner man, and then we drove off together. When we reached the Embassy there were some twenty persons in an ante-room awaiting their turns to be admitted to the secretary's presence, and we were motioned by one of the officials to take our seats at the place farthest from the inner door. My friend, however,

who assumed a grandiloquent air, protested that our business was of vital importance, and that the chief secretary would be greatly chagrined if we were kept waiting, and the result was, much to my astonishment, that we were permitted to take precedence of all the occupants of the room. On seeing the secretary, who treated us with great courtesy, I handed in my letter, answered his inquiries as to Mr. Borthwick, and what was being said in London about the state of things in France, and, having replied, when asked if there was anything he could do for me, that personally I had no need of present assistance, I introduced my friend, who at once put in a plea on behalf of the racehorse. "That," said the secretary, "can be arranged immediately," and, going at once to Lord Lyons's room, he returned in a few minutes with the much-needed permit, by means of which a magnificent English thoroughbred was spared the butcher's knife. My friend merely smiled—it was a smile of satisfaction—when I said to him, as we left the Embassy, "This is a practical proof of the truth of the old saying, 'They do these things much better in France.'"

## ELECTORAL CORRUPTION.

Going back to one of my experiences, the date of which is several years anterior to the French visits I have just described, it may be a matter of interest to some of my political readers if I briefly summarise some of the incidents of a notable Royal Commission appointed in 1867 to inquire into the electoral corruption of that dull and sleepy little Devonshire borough, Totnes. The commissioners, whose secretary was Mr. Bowen, afterwards a distinguished judge, but since deceased, were instructed to go back through the long vista of Totnes elections, until they could, if possible, find a pure election. The task was heavy and prolonged, for after a local inquiry occupying six weeks, and a further examination of London witnesses which added another week to their labours, they failed to find a single occasion on which anything in the nature of electoral purity could be discovered in that corrupt borough, and the result of their report was its ignominious disfranchisement. I have attended a number of Royal Commissions charged with similar duties, and I have no hesitation in saying that a combination,

or even a multiplication, of the arts, wiles and wickednesses known to the least scrupulous of election agents in all the other cases would hardly equal, and certainly not surpass, the political iniquities of Totnes whenever a contested election was taking place. Almost every elector, from the poorest voter to the well-to-do tradesman, looked upon a parliamentary election as a legitimate source of income. Bribery in money, wholesale treating, and every conceivable form of electoral corruption, paraded themselves in the borough, without the slightest attempt at concealment or disguise, whenever Whig and Tory, Conservative and Radical, offered themselves as candidates for the representation of this rotten constituency.

Before the Ballot Act, when the polling closed at four in the afternoon, and the names and votes of the electors were known to the agents and partisans of both sides, the inducements to vote for this or that individual went up like mercury in the thermometer on an increasingly hot day. In point of fact, political morality was at an exceedingly low ebb in this otherwise primitively minded Dart-side town, and the heaviest

rush to the polling booths invariably took place during the last half hour, when, if the numbers were pretty equal, the prices on both sides reached the highest point. In addition to money payments and open house treating, which sometimes went on for weeks, there was, just previous to the voting, a process known as "bottling" the voters. A number of these persons would be invited to some inn or beershop, and plied with strong drink until they were either absolutely stupefied and rendered unable to go to the poll in time; or they would be taken for a drive in a coach or wagonette, and feasted until they became *hors de combat*. Some of the drink described by different witnesses as being liberally given to the "bottled" consignments was described as "all nations," by which was meant a mixture of the dregs of spirit casks—whisky, brandy, rum and gin—with an occasional addition of strong beer, a compound capable of doing its work as rapidly as it proved to be effectual for the object in view.

On some occasions, particularly when parties were polling pretty evenly and the close of the poll was drawing near, a £10 note was absolutely sneered at; but

we had one witness who positively refused a bribe of £500. He, however, was one of the few honest men who made their appearance before the commissioners. I think his story is worth repeating. He was a tradesman in the borough, and had in his employ two or three men who were, like himself, on the electoral roll, and who no doubt he could have influenced had he chosen to do so. None of these persons had voted, when, during the last hour, an election agent strolled into the yard where the master was attending to some pigs. Examining the animals with a critical eye, the agent, pointing to one of them, said, "That's a particularly fine pig." "I don't see anything extraordinary in him," replied the owner. "Well," said the other, "I've taken a fancy to him, and I don't mind giving you £500 for that pig." The offer was, however, indignantly repudiated, the agent went away dejected, and master and men went to the poll and voted according to their political prejudices. Suffice it to say that the commissioners pursued their investigations as far back as the first election after the passing of the Reform Act of 1832, and being unable to find even the remotest resemblance to a pure election in the

ancient borough, it was, as I have already stated, deprived of the franchise it had exercised so long and so immorally.

## MR. BRIGHT AT BIRMINGHAM.

It has been my fortune on numerous occasions to be present at Mr. John Bright's annual addresses to his Birmingham constituents. The meetings were generally held in the Town Hall, which has a spacious room accommodating several thousands of people, but on certain extraordinary occasions the popular orator has spoken at Bingley Hall, which has a much larger capacity, but which, like the Town Hall, was always densely packed when the great statesman had arranged to speak there. As all Mr. Bright's speeches have been published, it is unnecessary to recapitulate any of his eloquent periods, but I may furnish an amusing anecdote which will afford a means of contrasting the telegraphic service of more than forty years ago with the perfection it has reached in 1906.

My old and now deceased friend, Mr. W. V. Edsall, of the *Daily News* parliamentary staff, and myself had

undertaken to telegraph a speech of Mr. Bright's to all the London papers with the exception of *The Times*, which preferred to have a special report by members of its own corps. At that time there was only one Morse wire available, and as *The Times* had secured this we were obliged to be content with a wretched system by which the words were signalled by strokes on a bell, which left no permanent marks such as were printed on the Morse tape, by which, in case of an error, the receiving clerk could rectify it by reference to the dots and dashes recorded on the paper. The speech made about three columns, which were halved by Mr. Edsall and myself, and handed in at the post office in good time. My friend and I were then able to catch a midnight train back to London. The reader may imagine the horror with which I read in the *Morning Star* next morning my portion of the speech, which contained no fewer than sixty more or less gross blunders. The worst of the lot was this: Mr. Bright had been strongly criticised for his American proclivities, and in defending himself against certain newspaper attacks on this subject he said, "But

whatever the Americans may say, they can at least say this, that they have not left the bones of hundreds of thousands of their citizens to whiten a hundred European battlefields," a sentence sufficiently intelligible as it was spoken. But lo! the telegraphed version! "Whatever the Americans may say, they can at least say this, that they have not left hundreds of thousands of their citizens to feed upon the bones of a hundred European battlefields." The *Morning Star*, of which Mr. Bright was one of the proprietors, was the only paper which gave this particular passage; the other journals had judiciously ignored it as a ridiculous blunder on the part either of the reporter or telegraphist. Jumping out of bed the moment I had seen the mess that had been made of my "copy," I went at once to my friend Edsall, who on perusing his share of the report found that it was about as full of errors as mine. Both of us then proceeded to the office of the *Morning Star*, in which the report was a great deal worse than in the other papers, and saw Mr. Dymond, the then manager of that journal. When we had shown him our corrections of the miserable telegram appearing in

the *Morning Star*, he told us he was glad we had called and explained the matter, otherwise he should have assumed that we had been "dining" before we wrote our report. The result was that he refused to pay his share of the telegraphing, and certain of the post office telegraphists came in for a good "wigging."

### MR. GLADSTONE AT LEEDS.

Mr. Gladstone I have frequently reported, not only in the House of Commons, but also when he has delivered orations in the country. I remember being at a meeting which he addressed at Leeds, when it was agreed, in order that he should speak to as large an audience as possible, that the Cloth Hall Yard, which afforded an ample area, should for the nonce be roofed in so as to convert it into a temporary hall. The upper part of the place was accordingly boarded over, and it was arranged that the meeting should be held in the daytime, the attendance of artisans, wool workers, and others being facilitated by the closing for the time being of a considerable number of mills and workshops.

Long before Mr. Gladstone was timed to arrive the whole of the large space available for the meeting was packed by an assemblage such as it has never been my lot to see under one roof before nor since. It was estimated that no fewer than thirty-six thousand persons were crowded together on that occasion. Except on a platform which ran along one side of the building, there were no seats for the people thus massed together, and as they were so very closely wedged that the only fitting simile would be that of a huge bundle of firewood, the heat soon became intolerable, and scores of fainting persons were lifted out of their places, carried over the heads of the people, through a passage under the platform, and deposited outside. A cry shortly arose for fresh air, and this was supplied by the speedy removal of a large portion of the wooden roof, so that by the time Mr. Gladstone made his appearance, which he did amid thundering cheers, the ventilation of the place was rendered sufficiently satisfactory, and what at one time appeared likely to become a panic was averted. As Mr. Gladstone walked along the platform towards the rostrum, which projected

from the centre, he seemed struck with amazement at the size of the vast assembly, and turning to his wife, who accompanied him, was seen to shake his head, as though telling her he feared he could never make himself heard by that multitudinous assembly. Several preliminary speakers having ineffectually "tried to obtain a hearing," Mr. Gladstone came forward, and when the cheering by which he was greeted had subsided, a hush fell upon the expectant thousands, so that, as he pitched his voice to those who were farthest from him, and spoke slowly, uttering his words very distinctly, I believe that every sentence was heard, except at times when his meaning was made clear by what had gone before, and the close of the intended period was drowned by vociferous applause.

### MR. GLADSTONE AT HAWARDEN.

On another occasion I was sent with several colleagues to report a speech Mr. Gladstone had been announced to make at Hawarden, in reply to an article by Mr. Forbes in the *Nineteenth Century*. We arrived at Chester overnight,

intending to proceed to Hawarden on the following afternoon, in time for Mr. Gladstone's meeting, which was to take place at night in the village schoolroom; but it unfortunately happened that a fierce gale swept the country before dawn next morning, and tore down most of the poles carrying the telegraph wires, doing no end of damage, which we were told would take a long time to repair, and might render the task of telegraphing a lengthy speech, such as Mr. Gladstone usually made, either very difficult or altogether impossible. Therefore, as soon as we had breakfasted, we drove over to Hawarden Castle and obtained an interview with the great statesman, to whom we explained the state of ffairs.

We had been informed at Chester that probably one wire could be made available in time for the meeting, and in order to lighten the pressure which would be thrown on the post office in the evening, we took with us a copy of Forbes' article and asked Mr. Gladstone if he would mark such passages as he might intend to quote. This the right hon. gentleman promised to do, and it was then suggested that, under the

circumstances, he might also write his peroration, which could be copied and, like the extracts, put on the wire for insertion in the body of the report under an alphabetical arrangement. After a little hesitation Mr. Gladstone consented to do this, and I was deputed to call upon him early in the afternoon to get his MS. When I arrived at the castle later on I was shown into the library, where Mr. Gladstone was finishing the desired peroration, and when he had done this he handed me the "copy," on the strict condition that it should be restored to him as soon as he entered the school-room. This condition was of course complied with, though I should have been glad to have kept the MS. as a memorial of the occasion. In the evening when the speech had been reported, written out and handed in at the post office, whither special telegraphists had been sent from Chester, we found that the possibility of getting it through in its entirety was more than problematical, and as a matter of fact only about one half the address appeared in the next morning's papers, all owing to a heavy gale and the faulty overhead telegraph system.

## MR. GLADSTONE'S MIDLOTHIAN CAMPAIGN.

I was also one of a staff who accompanied Mr. Gladstone on his first Midlothian election campaign, when by dint of his high position as a statesman, his remarkable eloquence and his indomitable energy, he succeeded in capturing the vacant seat in spite of the tremendous efforts made by the Duke of Buccleuch, the chief landowner in the county, and the man up to that time supposed to possess a political influence dominating that of all the other territorial magnates in that part of Scotland. His first speech was delivered in the Edinburgh Music Hall, and as an illustration of the interest aroused by the coming contest between Mr. Gladstone and the eldest son of the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord Dalkeith, I may state that from the English and Scottish newspapers no fewer than ninety odd reporters were present at this and numerous subsequent meetings.

At one or two places where Mr. Gladstone addressed the Midlothian electorate spacious wooden buildings were specially erected for a single address in places where no suitable hall was

obtainable, and on his way to Scotland he made frequent speeches to the crowds collected at different railway stations to greet the popular hero of the day. On leaving Midlothian Mr. Gladstone went still farther north, finishing his Highland tour at Taymouth Castle, the seat of the then Earl, now Marquess, of Breadalbane. In his progress towards the Highlands Mr. Gladstone addressed large crowds at several stopping-places on the line of railway, notably at Perth, where the train was timed to remain for a sufficient interval to enable Mr. Gladstone to make a somewhat lengthened address to an immense assembly of Perthshire citizens, and where, just outside the railway station, a platform had been erected and a desk placed upon it whence the speech could be delivered.

There being no tables at which the reporters could take notes, I had Mr. Gladstone's permission to make use of a part of his desk, where, although standing, I could do my work in comparative comfort. It was a bitterly cold day, and when, as Mr. Gladstone was about to speak, he removed his hat there were numerous shouts of "Keep your hat on, sir." "No," responded he; "it is a thing I

never do," and so, in that icy atmosphere, he gave his address bareheaded. After he had been speaking some time, Mrs. Gladstone, who was standing beside him, and who accompanied him to all his meetings throughout the campaign, said in a low voice, "Think of the time, William"; whereupon, taking out his watch and consulting it, Mr. Gladstone, speaking loud enough to be heard by the crowd, said, "I have ten minutes yet," whereupon the people cheered, and he went on with his speech. The Taymouth Castle speech having been given, Mr. Gladstone returned southward, winding up his long series of meetings at Glasgow, where, as in all other places he had visited, he had a highly popular reception.

One of Mr. Gladstone's earlier meetings was held in the Waverley Market, a large glass building at the post office end of Prince's Street, which had been cleared for the occasion of all its stands and stalls, and furnished with a platform for the great orator and a number of privileged citizens. As usual at these Midlothian meetings the building was densely packed a long time before Mr. Gladstone's arrival, and as no seats had

been provided for the general public in the body of the building, the close contact of thousands of human bodies, and the heated and imperfectly ventilated space around them, caused an appreciable number of the spectators to faint, and most of these had to be lifted out of the crush and carried by uplifted hands over the heads of the people, to an outlet beneath the platform. It was a bitterly cold night, the external atmosphere registering many degrees of frost, and as the breath of the people below ascended to the glass roof, it speedily condensed and fell at intervals in thick heavy drops, like the earlier indications of a heavy thunder shower. What with the heat and the frequent indications of distress among the auditors, Mr. Gladstone mercifully condensed his speech within unwonted limits, and in less than a third of the time he usually occupied his listeners were enabled to enjoy the luxury of the fresh, though chilly, air outside.

## SIR CHARLES WOOD AND THE COTTON TARIFF.

A good many years ago, at a time when the question of the Indian Cotton

Tariff was causing a great deal of agitation in the North, especially among the Lancashire manufacturers and merchants, I went with a deputation to Sir Charles Wood, afterwards Lord Halifax, who was then at the head of the India Office, my object being to send a special report to certain Manchester and Liverpool papers. I handed in my card asking permission to be present, but Sir Charles sent his secretary to me to say that he wished to speak his mind on the matter more freely than he could in the presence of reporters, and therefore I could not be admitted. On this refusal I was making my way downstairs, when I heard a voice calling me back. The owner of the voice was Mr. Baxter Langley, a former editor of the *Morning Star*, but at that moment editing a Manchester paper. He told me he was a member of the deputation, and he thought it very important that the northern papers should have a report of what was about to take place. He added that if I would come to such and such chambers in Beaufort Buildings, Strand, at three o'clock that afternoon, he would dictate as much as I should require of the proceedings. I went, and Mr. Langley dictated something like a

column and a half, which I sent to not only the Manchester and Liverpool papers, but to the morning papers in London, all of which used my report. A day or two afterwards Sir Charles was tackled in the House of Commons about what he was reported to have said, and in reply, although he did not accuse the report of falsifying what he had stated, he asserted that certain passages had been omitted which, had they appeared, would have put a somewhat different complexion on his utterances.

Not long afterwards a second deputation, of a much more influential character than the first, and including a large number of Members of Parliament, waited on Sir Charles upon the same subject. I again sent in my card asking for admission. This time, instead of sending his secretary to me, Sir Charles came out himself. He asked, "Are you the gentleman who asked for admission to the first deputation?" I told him I was. "But I thought I sent word that I did not wish to have reporters present, and that you were not to be admitted." "Neither was I, Sir Charles," was my reply. "Then," said he, "how came that report in the newspapers?" I said,

"Perhaps you are not aware that one of the members of that deputation was a journalist." "Ah," said Sir Charles, "I see. Perhaps a similar thing might happen again, and as I would rather have an accurate report than one to which I may have to take exception, I think you had better come in." When I was admitted Sir Charles kept the deputation waiting for a minute or two while a chair and desk were obtained for my use, and then the proceedings commenced, and I was again successful in supplying an extensive clientele.

### SIR E. CARDWELL AND MR. HARCOURT AT OXFORD.

While Sir Edward, afterwards Viscount, Cardwell was member for the city of Oxford I occasionally went down there to report his annual address to his constituents. This used to be given at the dinner of some society, the name of which I do not remember; but on one occasion, after Sir William, then Mr., Harcourt had been returned as Sir Edward's colleague in the House of Commons, the latter gentleman, who was then only beginning to make his reputation as a

member of the lower legislative assembly, made a rather lengthy, but certainly brilliant speech, which, however, I did not report, as I was only instructed to do a column of Sir E. Cardwell. I was seated opposite Mr. Harcourt, and when he had finished he leant across the table and asked if there was any reporter there who represented *The Times*, through which journal he had acquired distinction by numerous letters signed "Historicus." I told him I was there for that and other London papers—there were no Press agencies then—and, handing over a bundle of papers to me, he said he would rather I should supply the speech they contained to *The Times* than any notes I might have taken; but he added it would be as well if I would interject any of the usual parenthetical cheers, and so forth, so as to make the report more complete. This I did, and next morning *The Times* came out with something like three columns of Mr. Harcourt's speech.

Shortly after this, being about to report some meeting in the Midlands, I wrote, among others, to the manager of *The Times*, asking whether I should include that journal in my list. I received a favourable reply, and was subsequently

told that the editor had inquired whether I was the same Mr. Bussey who had reported Mr. Harcourt's address at Oxford. Being told that I was, the editor said, "By all means let Mr. Bussey do the Midland report," and of course I did it.

## THE FATAL ACCIDENT TO BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

At the time of the fatal accident to Dr. Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester, I was taking a three days' walk with Mr. Corlett, then the turf authority of the *Sportsman*, under the title of "Vigilant and Wizard," and as our way lay through Dorking, I, having a cousin in business there as a wine and spirit merchant, suggested that we should pass the night in that town and get my relative to spend the evening with us. This was arranged, and, late at night, my cousin drew me aside and stated that news had just been brought in by a coachman who had driven a doctor over to Mr. Farrer's, one of the permanent officials of a Government department—I think the Board of Trade—where lay the body of the Bishop of Winchester, who had broken his neck by

being thrown from his horse while riding along a roadway not far from Mr. Farrer's, in company with Lord Granville.

Being always on the alert for anything of importance in the way of journalistic matter, I went at once with Mr. Corlett to the house of the doctor, and having found that the news was authentic, we immediately proceeded to the post office, whence I desired to send a brief paragraph to the Press Association, on whose parliamentary staff I was then employed. Although it was by this time past midnight, I knocked up the postmaster and explained to him how important was the news I wanted to send, and the desirability of having it telegraphed as soon as possible throughout the kingdom. The postmaster, although only half-dressed, obligingly consented to send the telegram I wished to despatch, and this was accomplished almost immediately.

Next morning early Mr. Corlett and I went over to Mr. Farrer's, and there saw Lord Granville, who further corroborated the melancholy information we had received overnight. Mr. Farrer kindly allowed his head gardener, who had assisted in conveying the body of the late bishop to his residence, to accompany

us to the place where the accident had occurred, and there, on the grass where Dr. Wilberforce had fallen, we saw the outline of the form of the illustrious dead. The bishop, it seemed, was anything but a model horseman, being bulky and short-legged, besides which he was rather careless in the way he handled the reins, and while riding on a long stretch of soft grass running by the side of a cart road his horse stumbled at a depression, though it did not fall, but its rider was thrown on his head, the fall breaking his neck, and producing almost instantaneous death. Mr. Corlett and I indited as full an account as we could gather for the Monday morning's papers, and on the following day attended the inquest, which was held at Mr. Farrer's house, when Lord Granville, the only witness of the accident, gave evidence as to how it occurred, and a verdict of accidental death was, as a matter of course, returned.

## JOURNALISTIC MASONIC LODGE.

As a matter of interest to journalists, I may mention that upwards of twenty years ago I assisted in the establishment

of a masonic lodge, which emanated from the Parliamentary Gallery, and is known, through its place of origin, as the Gallery Lodge. All its members are journalists, and I believe it is, up to date, the only lodge composed entirely of pressmen. Doubtless there are many places, like New York and other large cities abounding in newspapers, with their necessary staffs of editors, sub-editors and reporters, in which similar masonic fraternities could be easily established, but at present the Gallery Lodge stands alone as a purely journalistic body of Freemasons. In connection with this lodge there has been established for many years a Royal Arch Chapter, and both are in a flourishing condition. For the suggestion that we should, if a warrant could be obtainable from the Grand Lodge, establish a masonic community of our own, we were indebted to an old and valued friend and colleague of mine, Mr. Herbert Wright, who was a member of the *Standard* parliamentary staff for a great many years, and became our first initiate when the lodge was formed. Mr. Henry Massey was our warrant master, I was warrant senior warden, and Mr. Minstrel, our warrant junior warden, Mr. Basil Cooke being our

first secretary. We were told that we might have some difficulty in procuring the permission necessary for the formation of the lodge, because, owing to the popularity infused into the order by the King, then Prince of Wales and Grand Master of English Masonry, applications for the establishment of new lodges had become so numerous that it was deemed necessary to exercise considerable discretion in the issue of fresh warrants, but we learnt, however, after the Gallery Lodge had been formally opened, that the moment our memorial was submitted to His Royal Highness the Prince at once granted our petition. Since its formation the lodge has been in the habit of receiving many distinguished visitors, numbers of whom hold high rank in the craft. Its members have an annual holiday at some place of interest in the country, and every year, also, what is always a most agreeable and enjoyable "ladies' night."

## MR. DISRAELI ILL.

Among my recollections is a journey I once took to Hughenden, at a time when it was reported that Mr. Disraeli

was seriously ill. I regret to say that, without looking up the geography of Bucks, I took it for granted that Hughenden was somewhere near Aylesbury, where I used to go every year to report Mr. Disraeli's periodical speech to his constituents. I found, however, on reaching Aylesbury that Hughenden was about nineteen miles away, and in order to get there I had to be driven to High Wycombe. The roads at that time were in a fearful condition. A day or so previously there had been a heavy fall of snow, the partial melting of which had been followed by a severe frost, so that the surface we had to drive over was practically a sheet of ice, and dangerous withal. Taking the precaution of seeing my horse well roughed, I started on one of the coldest rides I have ever experienced, but fortunately arrived at my destination without accident. At Hughenden I was informed that there was no cause for alarm in Mr. Disraeli's case, as he was only kept indoors by a slight indisposition; and, having despatched this information by telegraph, I betook myself to the railway station for my homeward journey. It was a clear starlight night when I started, and the

hoar frost on trees and platform at Bourne End, where the train was unaccountably delayed for more than a quarter of an hour, glistened like diamonds in the bright moonlight. During the long wait a solitary individual, the stationmaster, was pacing the platform with a sort of military stride, his frogged surtout giving him quite a martial air. After a time I put my head out of the window and called in a loud voice, as he was then some distance away, "Mr. Stationmaster!" The sound brought a number of heads out of the windows along the line of carriages, and I heard a general titter when I asked the official, "Is this the Bourne from whence no traveller returns?" The stationmaster, however, did not participate in the humour of the situation, and, making no reply, turned upon his heel and marched contemptuously away.

## MR. DISRAELI AT EDINBURGH.

In the year 1866, when the Earl of Derby had resigned the Premiership through failing health, and his mantle had fallen on the shoulders of the then Conservative leader of the House of

Commons, Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, I was present at the annual dinner of the Merchant Taylors Company, where Mr. Disraeli was the principal guest. I was attending on behalf of the *Morning Post*, which at that time was one of the two London newspapers to whom the courtesy of an invitation was extended by the famous Livery, the other paper being *The Times*. It so happened that I was seated next to the Lord-Advocate, then Mr., and afterwards Lord Gordon, who noticing my name on the card near my plate, and being well acquainted with my elder brother, entered into conversation with me mainly in relation to Press work, as to which he asked a good many questions, such as are frequently put by men outside the journalistic circle. While we were talking he reverted to a recent visit Mr. Disraeli had paid to Edinburgh, where he had made what I ventured to characterise as a record after-dinner speech—a speech of fully three hours' duration. I told Mr. Gordon that my brother, who was present at the banquet referred to, had made what in the case of a man in Mr. Disraeli's position could only be regarded as the somewhat wicked suggestion that, perhaps,

the person who had provided the wines had not been sufficiently careful as to the quality of the liquor put upon the upper table. "Well," said Mr. Gordon, "I think I can tell you a story about that. Mr. Disraeli was my guest during his Edinburgh visit, and I remember that after we had driven home from the dinner I asked him whether he would take a little supper before he retired to rest. 'No,' he said, 'I don't want anything to eat.' 'Then,' I suggested, 'you won't object to joining me in our old Scottish custom by taking a *deoich an doris* or parting cup?' 'No,' again replied Mr. Disraeli, 'I would rather not take anything to drink. The fact is, Gordon, I have been drinking some confoundedly bad claret at that place, and it has rather upset me.' Now that 'confoundedly bad claret,' as Mr. Disraeli called it, was some particularly fine old brown sherry, which, together with some other wines, being doubtful as to the quality of what might be supplied at the banquet, I had sent up specially from my own cellar in order that no fault might be found with the liquor placed on the chief table, and during the three hours Mr. Disraeli was speaking he managed to

empty a decanter of it which stood in front of him."

### THE CHOLERA IN HAMBURG.

A few years ago I was enjoying a holiday in Cornwall, where I made Falmouth my head-quarters. At that time there was some dread of the cholera, which had appeared upon the Continent, and was playing such fearful havoc in Hamburg that deaths were taking place there at something like a thousand a day. I heard one day that a couple of important cases were about to come before the Falmouth magistrates, in consequence of the crews of two vessels, which had been awaiting orders in the harbour, having refused to go to Hamburg, and that they had been summoned for disobedience. One case was to be taken as a test case, involving the decision as to both. I endeavoured to induce a local reporter to send an account of the proceedings to our evening paper, I being then on the staff of the *Standard*. He, however, declined to send to an evening paper, on the ground that by so doing he might be imperilling the use of his morning paper "copy," the evening paper

reports at that time being regularly scissored by some of the morning journals. Anxious that the *Evening Standard* should have a report, I arranged to telegraph one myself, and during the two days the magisterial examination lasted I forwarded full accounts of the proceedings. The result of the investigation was that the magistrates, in full bench, unanimously decided that, under the circumstances, the crews were fully justified in refusing to proceed to the cholera-stricken port, and both cases were very properly dismissed.

## AN AQUARIUM LIBEL SUIT.

I had, rather unwillingly I admit, to figure in a libel action brought by the directors of the Aquarium Company against Mr. Parkinson, a member of the County Council, for a speech he had made in connection with the Aquarium licence, imputing indecency to a portion of a marionette exhibition, which then constituted one of the "turns" at that place of entertainment. As I had an annual complimentary ticket from the management I used frequently, when time permitted, to walk over from the Houses of Parliament for the purpose of taking some

light refreshment and seeing what was going on. As the marionette performance was exceedingly clever and could bear looking at repeatedly, I witnessed it on numerous occasions. One day, at a time when I was unaware of the suit the Aquarium Company were bringing, my friend Mr. Wilkinson, the company's secretary, asked if I had not frequently seen the marionette display? I of course replied that I had. "Well," said Mr. Wilkinson, "have you ever noticed anything improper or indecent in it?" "Certainly not," I replied; "but what scene in the little show are you referring to?" "That," answered my friend, "in which clown and pantaloon go through a series of tricks—I am now referring especially to the butterfly business." I remembered that there was a scene in which a yellow butterfly was dangled, here and there, across the stage, and ineffectually chased by the imitation pantomimists, until at last it settled on the floor, and the clown, thinking he had caught it as he threw himself down where it seemed to be, called out, "I've got it, Joey." "Where?" said the pantaloon, coming across to look. "There," replied the clown, throwing up his foot

and giving his companion a kick under the chin. The next thing I knew of the matter was revealed in my being served with a subpœna to give evidence at the approaching trial. I was one of the first witnesses examined in the case, and in answer to Mr. Dickens, Q.C., who appeared on behalf of the Aquarium Company, I stated that I had not only seen nothing of an indecent character in the performance, but had taken my wife and my married daughter to witness it, and that during the afternoon entertainments I had frequently seen Members of Parliament and clergymen with their wives and children in the stalls, evidently enjoying the exhibition. The trial ended in a verdict for the plaintiffs, with £500 damages, and costs. Against this Mr. Parkinson appealed, but without success, and in addition to the £500 damages had to pay the costs of both suits.

## THE FIRST LONDON TRAMWAY.

The first tramway laid in London was introduced, very early in the sixties, by George Francis Train, an American, who had brought the invention from the

United States. Several years before he succeeded in obtaining authority to initiate his new system of street locomotion, he endeavoured to obtain parliamentary sanction to his proposals, but the committees of the two Houses, by whom his petition was considered, arrived at the conclusion, after full consideration of his plans and the evidence by which they were supported, that the balance of inconvenience to the general traffic so seriously outweighed the advantages which might accrue to the public from a cheaper and easier mode of urban travelling than then existed, that the assent of Parliament was refused. Subsequently, however, Mr. Train obtained from the local authorities of Birkenhead and Lambeth conditional power to lay two horse traction tram lines. That in London was what might be termed an experimental undertaking, as the local authority had reserved power to terminate the contract in the event of the line proving a source of danger or inconvenience to the ordinary vehicular traffic.

The metropolitan line was laid from the Horns, facing Kennington Park, to the foot of Westminster Bridge, and

while it was allowed to remain in use was well patronised by the public, who found it a cheaper and much more smooth and easy a method of riding than that to which they had been accustomed in the ordinary omnibus. But the tramway had one grave defect, which was the occasion of frequent and sometimes serious accidents in the case of the general traffic. The flanges of the rails on which the cars ran were raised half an inch above the surface of the road, and although a wagon, cart or carriage could cross them at right angles without difficulty, it was quite another thing to get over them when going in a diagonal direction, and it consequently frequently happened that the wheels of vehicles striking the line in this way, would glide along the raised side of the rail, through the obstructive action of the flange, and where the attempt was being made to cross a little way in front of the tram, the sliding motion of the wheels brought the conveyance into collision with the car itself.

I once had personal experience of this tendency to accident, for on one occasion, while riding in a hansom along the Kennington Park Road, I was only

saved from a smash by the alertness of my cabman and the promptitude with which the driver of the car put on his brake. As it was, the near wheel of my vehicle became locked in the frontal ironwork of the tram, and was only extricated after a lapse of several minutes. The result was that, after about a year's experience, the rails of Mr. Train's tram line were taken up, and nothing further in the way of tramways for the Metropolis was heard of until the flat rail was resorted to, and the Tramways Act of 1870 was passed, whereby powers were given to the Board of Trade to authorise the making of tramways, with the consent of the local authorities; since then the present systems of horse-drawn vehicles, now going rapidly out, overhead and underground electric tramways, and tram-cars propelled by the same motive power have grown up and come into general use all over the kingdom, so that it is possible in London and in some of the provincial towns, which have tram lines with adjoining terminals, to ignore the railway altogether, and travel many miles on continuous rails.

## ELECTION PETITIONS.

It has been my duty on many occasions to report election petitions for London and provincial papers, that is to say, petitions against the return of Members of Parliament on the ground of bribery, treating, and corruption of such a character as it is necessary to prove in order to vitiate the return of the elected candidate. Up to the year 1868 all such petitions when presented to the House of Commons were referred to a select committee, which was to be chosen with as much regard to impartiality as could be ensured, under a system whereby each committee was invariably composed of three members belonging to one political party, and two who were chosen from the opposite side. This, it will be seen at a glance, was of necessity a one-sided arrangement, and, as such, was bound to work with a certain want of harmony, inasmuch as the report, on which the seat was retained or vacated, depended on the votes of the majority. Whether the committee were actuated by honest and honourable motives or not, their decision, on which the House invariably acted, was always open to the imputation

of party bias, an imputation which was largely accentuated by what usually happened after a general election, when there was always, at least during the period before the passage of the Ballot Act, a considerable crop of petitions as the natural outcome of the heat engendered by fierce party contests. Of course, before the Ballot Act, when the way in which every elector voted was known the moment he had appeared at the poll, there was a much heavier premium on the resort to bribery, intimidation, the "bottling," or temporary removal from the scene, of venal electors, and other improper practices, than it is possible to imagine under the existing system; hence the greater frequency of parliamentary petitions in what have been termed the "good old days."

Such a state of things, however, could not be allowed to last, and in the year 1868 Parliament resolved to obviate whatever scandal had attached to the committee system by relegating the duty of deciding all election petitions to the judges, whose dicta could be open to none of the objections that were constantly urged against the mode of procedure theretofore in vogue. The judges,

as can readily be imagined, hardly relished the imposition of this addition to their ordinary judicial labours, mainly from a mistaken fear that it would tend to arouse suspicion as to their probity; but the Act being passed, they had to submit, and each court being called upon to place one member of its body upon the rota for this particular service, their work in this direction speedily commenced, and they have since continued to administer election law to the general satisfaction of all parties.

The first of a series of occasions on which I went on circuit with a judge appointed to try election petitions was at the initiation of the new system, when the country was all agog to know whether it would work as satisfactorily as had been anticipated. The judge to whose circuit I was attached was the Justice Wills whose unaccountable death by his own hand some years afterwards created a painful sensation in the legal world, of which he was an undoubted ornament. His depth of legal learning and marvellous memory of what he had read, were alike the wonder and admiration of his confrères at the Bar. I saw him first at a Maidstone assize, seated

in his stuff gown in the Nisi Prius Court, where he was, I believe, without a brief. Presently the judge presiding in the Criminal Court came in to consult his learned brother on some knotty legal point that had been raised in a case he was trying. The Nisi Prius judge, unable to solve the difficulty and aware of Mr. Wills's profound knowledge of leading cases, turned to that gentleman, saying, "Perhaps, Mr. Wills, you can assist us?" Having had the point at issue explained to him, Mr. Wills at once gave a reference to a decision on a similar matter, qualified, as he stated, by that given in another case, naming in each instance the book in which it was to be found, together with the page on which it was printed. It is no wonder that in the case of a man like this he should have been raised, as Mr. Wills was, straight from stuff to ermine, without the intervening silk.

The only case tried by this accomplished judge which I need mention was that of the petition against the late Sir Robert Peel, eldest son of the great statesman, and brother of the present Viscount Peel, whose peerage was conferred upon him for long and faithful service as Speaker of the House of

Commons. The case was heard at Tamworth, and Sir Robert Peel was defended by Mr. Hardinge Giffard, Q.C., the ex-Lord Chancellor, a position he has thrice held. There can be no two opinions as to the skill with which he argued his client's case. Mr. Justice Wills had a habit, which is not unusual with some of the judges, of interrupting counsel when he was trying to hammer home the different points of a case, and when, while doing this in Mr. Giffard's case, he seemed to indicate that he was against a particular view or doctrine, the argument was at once abandoned, in diplomatic deference to the Bench, and another point brought forward and elaborated with all the art and dexterity of which a wily and adroit word fencer is capable. At any rate, Sir Robert Peel was successful in retaining his seat, and there was great rejoicing among his constituents at the result.

## A BALLOON ASCENT.

There are, I suppose, comparatively few of my readers who have experienced the delights of traversing the upper regions in a balloon, although, in view of the numerous attempts that are now being

made by scientific aeronauts to propel by various mechanical devices huge weight-carrying vehicles, inflated by gas or lifted by monstrous wings, through the atmosphere in controllable directions, it is possible that when the difficulties hitherto encountered have all been mastered aerial journeys to definite points may be brought within the compass of human enterprise. It was my lot during my stay in Norfolk to make a balloon ascent. I was one of several enterprising passengers who ventured, under the careful guidance of a skilled aeronaut, to take a temporary leave of terra firma and risk a journey into cloudland.

The morning was calm, with only a slight breeze that would scarcely have lifted a paper kite, but the sky was overcast and threatened rain. When the little party had comfortably settled down in the car, and the order to let go had been given, the ropes which had held the balloon while it was being inflated were loosened, and up we went with a swift and almost perpendicular motion. But instead of experiencing, as I expected we should, a sort of giddiness occasioned by the rate at which the balloon shot upwards, the sensation of

suddenly mounting into space was the very reverse of this, because as we looked at the crowd we were leaving below and the fields, trees and houses in the vicinity, it was they which appeared to be receding from us, while we seemed to be stationary overhead. This peculiar optical delusion, however, vanished as one of my companions tore a sheet of paper into small pieces and threw them from the car, the fluttering fragments, which we knew to be making but a slow descent, being almost instantaneously left a long distance below, while the people who had witnessed and cheered our departure became dwarfed into insignificant atoms, until, shooting into the clouds above, we lost sight of everything save the dense mist by which we were surrounded. But before long we rose above the clouds, which, stretching outwards in illimitable vistas of dense and slowly undulating billows, reflecting, in a thousand shapes and ever-changing hues, the brilliant rays of the great and glorious sun, a scene of splendour which none of us, if I except our aeronaut, had ever previously witnessed.

Being now thousands of feet above the earth, some of the sand ballast we were carrying was emptied, whereby the upward

motion of the balloon was accelerated, and then, for half an hour or so, we sailed along in a horizontal direction. By and by, as the breeze, which was somewhat stronger than we had found it below, was wafting us in an easterly direction seaward, it was deemed prudent that we should make the necessary descent. This was accomplished by the liberation of a sufficient amount of gas to render the return to mother earth as safe as possible, and we were fortunate, after once more passing through the belt of clouds we had previously penetrated, in getting our grapnel fixed in a thick hawthorn fence, close to which, after a preliminary bump or two, we alighted, none the worse for our overhead journey. It was well for all of us that we reached terra firma when we did, for had we remained a few minutes longer in the balloon we should have found ourselves in the awkward predicament of having to descend into the North Sea, whence nothing but a stray vessel could have rescued us.

### THE THAMES ON FIRE.

Most of us remember an ancient phrase which, common enough in my

earlier days, still manages to retain its place in our English vocabulary, I refer to the trite though expressive saying, "Oh! he'll never set the Thames on fire." This deprecatory prediction is usually applied to some youngster whose intellectual resources are not of the most promising kind, and whose future ascent to anything beyond mediocrity, is regarded by his critics as an impossibility. But although the feat of setting fire to our great river is absolutely inconceivable, I was on one occasion an amazed eye-witness to what had a remarkable resemblance to the production of this extraordinary phenomenon.

The occurrence to which I refer took place, I think, in the year 1862. In those days old Blackfriars Bridge was the only means of traffic between Ludgate and Blackfriars Road, the splendid structure by which it has been replaced having then no existence save on certain architectural plans. The Embankment, too, was simply a possibility of the future, the whole of the Middlesex shore line, now occupied by magnificent hotels, the extended Temple Buildings, the City of London School, Cleopatra's Needle, and the charming gardens that grace the

northern side of the handsomest thoroughfare in London, being bordered by huge warehouses, floating in front of which when the tide was up, and lying flat on the black river mud when it was out, were hundreds of barges employed in the conveyance of coal and other merchandise to and from the different wharves that ran along the margin of the water.

One evening, as my wife and I were crossing from what is now called New Bridge Street towards the Surrey side, my attention was attracted to an unusual glare proceeding from a warehouse which then stood on the site of the present City of London School. Pausing against the parapet of the bridge, we noticed that an increasing volume of flame was pouring out of one of the lower doorways facing the river, and that in a few minutes the whole of that particular floor appeared to be in a state of fierce conflagration. The flames speedily laid hold of the floors above, and in an almost incredibly brief space of time the entire building was involved. Among the goods with which the warehouse was stored were a large number of barrels of oil, and as these caught fire one after another, their contents poured out of the building

and flowed in considerable volume into the river. Immediately below the building about a dozen empty coal barges had been moored and were lying on the mud, it being then low tide, in tiers of three. These barges were black from stem to stern with pitch or tar, and as the oil which was all ablaze swept round them, they took fire with a rapidity which I could hardly have thought possible if I had not seen it. Having commenced the work of destruction on the barges, all of which were rapidly consumed, the blazing oil spread itself out on the surface of the river, which soon displayed a threatening sheet of flame, extensive enough to create serious anxiety as to the havoc it might work among the shipping lower down the Thames. Fortunately, however, the oil, which formed only a thin surface, burnt itself out before it could accomplish much further mischief; but had the fire broken out as near to London Bridge as it was to that of Blackfriars, and had the flaming oil reached the Pool, it would probably have created an amount of destruction among the numerous vessels then moored in that portion of the river, most of them taking in or unloading costly cargoes bound for or being received

from every quarter of the globe, that, to use the expressive phrase of the late Boer President, would have "staggered humanity."

### JOURNALISTS' TRICKS.

Perhaps in writing these memoirs it would not be out of place to mention a few incidents of an amusing character which are associated in my memory with certain individuals at one time connected with the "Fourth Estate." Although the cases I am about to refer to relate to journalists who are now no more, I think it better to withhold their names in deference to the feelings of those they have left behind. There were, a good many years ago two reporters, well known to the journalistic confraternity, who made a living, for the most part, by what is known as "penny-a-lining," from the fact that most of their "copy" was paid for at that moderate rate, though several of the London journals pay half as much again for news thus sent in, and add a further fifty per cent. for matter from the provinces. And here it may be stated that there are many able and

energetic journalists who make good incomes by this sort of work—men without regular salaried engagements, who devote their time and attention either to some particular branch of public business, such as police reporting, going the rounds of the coroners' courts, picking up fashionable West End paragraphs, or culling from different parts of the Metropolis all sorts of miscellaneous items relating to accidents, drowning cases, fires and other matters which are likely to obtain acceptance as readable paragraphs. The men I have indicated kept up a sort of penny-a-lining partnership, and did so well that one of them had become proprietor of a number of cottages in one of the poorer districts of South London.

During one dead season, when, as the Irishman remarked, "nothing was stirring but stagnation," the two met and began to condole with each other on their bad luck; but in the course of conversation a happy idea struck one of them, who suggested that they should get up a bogus meeting in reference to the unsanitary condition of the dwellings of the poor in certain parts of the Metropolis. No sooner

said than done: one of the two was voted into the chair, and the other at once multiplied himself into "a large and influential audience." By the manufacture of fictitious names and a skilful resort to the local knowledge possessed by the two conspirators, an interesting indictment was framed in general terms against that well-known class of rapacious landlords who are to be found, not only in the Metropolis, but in other large towns, and who obtain from the poorest of the labouring population what are in reality exorbitant rents for wretched and unwholesome dwellings. This meeting had, for the time being, a successful result. The report was accepted by most of the papers to which it was sent, and in one or two cases was emphasised by leading articles calling the attention of the sanitary authorities to the state of things disclosed by the pretended speakers, and the necessity for prompt and vigorous action in dealing with the evils alleged to prevail in the squalid recesses of the capital. As a consequence of the publicity thus given to the subject, a number of genuine meetings were held, at which the matter

was fully discussed and strongly worded resolutions passed calling for Government intervention. This led to stimulated procedure on the part of the sanitary inspectors, and greatly to the chagrin of the property-owning journalist, through whose instumentality the agitation had been set on foot, a number of his unsanitary cottages were visited and condemned, and he was consequently under the necessity of spending a good deal more than he had bargained for in order to comply with the law and put his houses in a tenantable condition.

I may record as another instance that of a man, well known as an industrious "liner," who flourished at a time when competition was not half as keen as at the present day, and whose "copy," if at all interesting, was usually accepted in preference to that of rivals, because it was generally fairly apportioned to the space likely to be given to it, and was invariably written in good English, which, unfortunately, is not always the case among the lining fraternity. He was a painstaking and energetic follower of any clue likely to lead to a sensational article or paragraph, and at times has been the first in the field with items of

considerable public interest. But smart as he was, there came a time when, as the victim of a fatal error, caused by an attempt to deceive the sub-editors of the London morning papers, he came suddenly to grief, and had the mortification of being told that his name was placed on the black list in nearly all the metropolitan offices, and that in future his "copy" would not be accepted.

The story is brief, and may serve as a salutary warning to such as might otherwise be tempted from the path of journalistic morality. A man who had been convicted at the Lancaster Assizes of a sensational murder was to be executed on a certain morning, and the journalist I refer to had arranged to forward to the early editions of the London evening papers a full description of the scenes in and outside Lancaster Gaol—executions then taking place in public—immediately after Calcraft, who at that time was the executioner, had done his ghastly work. Taking everything for granted, and with the view of saving himself the expense of going to Lancaster, the reporter I speak of had, without leaving London, arranged a pretended telegram from himself, which

he had duly multiplied into so many "flimsies," and at the proper moment sent round to the existing evening papers. As a matter of course, his fictitious description of the culprit's last moments, how he walked with apparent firmness to the scaffold, and how the crowd of onlookers in front of the prison demeaned itself, was published at an early hour in all the papers for which it had been ordered; but what a shock was experienced in the sub-editorial rooms of each of these journals when, later in the day, came veritable information from Lancaster that the public execution of the murderer had not taken place, as the man had evaded the ignominious and degrading spectacle by strangling himself in a closet, shortly before he would otherwise have perished at the hands of justice.

Frauds such as that which I have described are not often committed by newspaper men; indeed, in these days of press associations and news agencies, all of them hourly jostling with each other as to which shall be first with this or that intelligence, it is practically impossible that they could take place, although there are some men who, by dint of unusual powers of invention, and

the facility by which, when detected in one piece of imposture, they adopt a change of name and address, and perpetrate another, manage, until they are finally run to earth, to make the wherewithal for bread and cheese, and, mayhap, beer and tobacco.

One of the latter came, not very long ago, under my own personal experience, his method being, without resort to a change of name, the invention day by day of all sorts of paragraphs, mostly about accidents in different parts of the Metropolis, generally of a fatal or serious character. Most of these paragraphs gave the names and addresses of the persons indicated; but, strange to say, the writer seemed to possess a singular monopoly of the pretended facts, and as none of the news agencies or competing liners forwarded "copy" relating to the same events, suspicion at last fell upon the writer, and his fraudulent career was speedily stopped. At the suggestion of a colleague of mine, our contributor was unmasked by the simple expedient of a reference to the *London Directory*, wherein none of the names and addresses given in a number of paragraphs could be found. As I was the individual "taken in" by

this artful scribe, I feel almost tempted to give his name, or that under which I received his copy, but I forbear. Suffice it to say that his delinquencies were brought home to him in a rough-and-ready way. One of his proved fictitious paragraphs was inserted, and when he subsequently called at our pay office for the lineage money he was confronted with his own copy, and told that the imposture had been detected and his account was consequently closed. He took the paper, crumpled it in his hand, and made a sudden bolt out of doors, to be heard of and seen no more. Of course he might have been prosecuted, but the case was deemed too small for further notice, beyond what was done in the sub-editorial room, where his name appears to this day in company, I am sorry to say, with a number of others, as one to be consigned to future oblivion.

As amusing, though by no means a creditable case, especially as it involved the character of a well-known parliamentary reporter engaged on a London morning paper, occurred on the occasion of the first attempted voyage of Brunel's great naval masterpiece, the *Great Eastern*. The gentleman I speak of was

a man of considerable learning and literary ability, and was selected by the editor of his paper, on account of his brilliant descriptive powers, to accompany the huge vessel on her way down the Thames from Deptford to Portland Roads, her first place of call. But, like the Dutchman who boasted that he was the only one of a large party who was saved from drowning when the vessel was upset, he "did not go." For some reason or other he failed to take his passage on board the ship, and thinking he could give a sufficient description of the leviathan and her reception along the populous highway she was to traverse, he penned a highly coloured and admirably written narrative in the quietude of his London chamber. He had, of course, entirely overlooked the possibility of an accident befalling the monster vessel within a comparatively few miles of her point of departure, and what must have been his surprise when, after he had handed in his carefully-written "copy," he heard of the terrible fatality which befell the ship through the bursting of one of her boilers when she had proceeded only as far as Hastings. The explosion, which was caused by some

defect in the casting of one of the chimneys, resulted in the deaths of ten firemen, and serious injury to a number of other persons; but, as a matter of course, this apalling disaster remained unchronicled by the writer whose duty it was to have been on the spot and to have sent the fullest particulars to his paper, and although he managed to escape the summary dismissal he had so well merited, he was severely censured by his superiors, and in other ways was made to feel the effects of their righteous indignation.

As an instance of right-down audacity on the part of a journalist the following story would be difficult to cap. Something more than fifty years ago a large and important meeting of clergymen had been called for the purpose of discussing one of the then pressing questions in relation to the English Church, and it was specially announced that tickets of admission would be given to none but men in holy orders. Among the penny-a-line fraternity of that day was a well-known and venturesome individual who told some of his confrères that he intended to be present and give a report of what might take place at the restrictive

assembly. "But," said one, "you can't get a ticket, and even if you were to disguise yourself as a clergyman, your face"—it had a wonderfully Bardolphian appearance—"would betray you." "Anyhow, I'm going to be there," replied the intrepid knight of the pencil, and "there," when the time came, he assuredly was, and, what is more, he had a good report of the proceedings in all the London morning papers.

Donning a clerical suit, which he hired at a theatrical costumier's, he presented himself among the early arrivals, and when asked by the secretary, at the foot of the stairs leading to the largest room in Exeter Hall, to produce his ticket, he said he had unfortunately left it in his portmanteau at the hotel he was to stay at, having made a very hurried journey from Portsmouth, where the ship of which he was chaplain was berthed. "Your name and that of your vessel?" demanded the secretary. "Parker, Her Majesty's ship *Primrose*," was the mendacious answer. As the Bardolphian countenance might well have passed muster as that of a naval chaplain, the non-production of the admission ticket was excused, and the

supposed clerical representative of one of Her Majesty's warships was allowed to go upstairs.

Arrived in the large hall, he made his way to a seat in front of the platform, where his immediate neighbour was a bishop. After a while, just as the chairman had taken his seat and the proceedings were about to commence, the secretary was seen hurrying up the body of the hall, and vigorously beckoning in the direction of the pseudo-chaplain, who, however, pretended not to see the excited official, and when the bishop on his right said to him, "I think our friend the secretary wants to speak to you," he merely shook his head with the remark, "It is all right, my lord; he only wants to know whether I am comfortable, and I can assure you that I am, perfectly so." The chairman rising at that moment, the secretary retired and the speaking began. When all was over and the fictitious chaplain was making his way to the outer door, he was stopped by the indignant secretary, who said, "Sir, you have deceived me. I have looked through the *Navy List*, and I find that there is no such vessel as Her Majesty's ship *Primrose*." "Oh!" was the

reply, "you be blowed!" and without another word the dishonest liner vanished into the street.

### LORD BROUGHAM.

During the Parliamentary Session of 1866, I was one evening about to ascend the staircase leading to the House of Lords Gallery, when I was stopped by Lord Brougham, then, I imagine, about the oldest peer in the patrician assembly. His Lordship, who had a sheet of paper in his hand, asked me, when he had ascertained where I was going, whether I would show the document he was holding to my brother reporters. This, of course, I promised to do, and on reaching our writing-room I found that, written in a large and shaky hand, was the following announcement:—"Lord Brougham desires the reporters to take notice of his remarks on the Slave Trade to-night." Having shown this to my confrères, and wishing to retain the original as an addition to my collection of autographs, I made a copy of it, which I placed in a conspicuous position over the mantelpiece, putting the original in my pocket.

Of course everybody who was on duty when Lord Brougham rose tried to take a note of what he said; but as he spoke with his back to the gallery and in an exceedingly low voice, no one could hear what he was saying, and the speech, whatever it was, was consequently lost to the public.

## DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE GALLERY.

The Parliamentary Gallery can boast of having contained, at different times, a goodly number of men who have subsequently risen to positions of exceptional fame and distinction. Foremost amongst these I may mention Charles Dickens, a man who has made a mark on the tablets of English literature which time can never efface. Dickens has described in one of his novels, *David Copperfield*, how he acquired a knowledge of shorthand; and during my early association with the Gallery, I have conversed with several older hands who well remembered the time when the great novelist was one of themselves, and, as they used to say, the most dexterous note-taker and the

speediest in turning out his work in long-hand of any member of the reporting fraternity. The staff on which Charles Dickens flourished for a time was that of the old *Morning Chronicle*, a journal long since defunct. Another man who contrived to climb from the Gallery to the topmost rung of the ladder of fame was Lord Campbell, who, after a long and brilliant career at the Bar, became Lord Chancellor of Ireland. He, like Dickens, was for a short time a member of the Gallery staff of the then existing *Morning Chronicle*. Among the other distinguished lawyers who in their earlier careers have not despised a Gallery appointment were the late Lord Chief Justice of England (Lord Russell of Killowen) and Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., who fortunately is still amongst us, and who, although he has not yet exchanged the Bar for the Bench, holds one of the foremost positions in the more distinguished circle of legal luminaries. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, prior to his being elected a member of the Irish Parliamentary Nationalist party, used to assist in reporting debates in the two legislative Houses, while Mr. Lucy, popularly known as *Punch's* dog "Toby," over which

signature he has for many years contributed witty and amusing parliamentary summaries published by the London Charivari, for a time occupied a seat among the observant scribes located a little above the Speaker's chair. Mr. Lucy's notes and essays, comments and reminiscences, anent men and matters associated with parliamentary history for more than thrity years, as they have appeared in different magazines and periodicals, would collectively fill a good many volumes of highly-interesting and amusing matter. Of other men who have achieved title and position after experiences in the Gallery, the names of Sir E. Russell, the able editor of a widely-circulated Liverpool paper, and the late Sir Wemyss Reid, manager of Messrs. Cassell's publishing business and the founder of the periodical entitled *The Speaker*, are sufficiently familiar to the reading world; and it may be added that of the two hundred or more members of the Parliamentary Gallery at the present day a considerable number are barristers, some of whom occasionally practise in the law courts, while others are regular contributors to different branches of literature and art.

## LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM IN THE CITY.

Before the establishment of the Press Club, which has for some time been located in a Fleet Street court, just above Oliver Goldsmith's house—which, alas! has been recently pulled down and rebuilt as a commercial establishment—and at a period when the Savage Club was in comparatively low water and could not boast the multitude of literary and artistic members who now assemble in rooms overlooking the Adelphi Terrace, the only two places in which the man-about-town could rely on meeting a select few belonging to journalistic and the kindred circles which revolve round the area wherein Fleet Street and part of the Strand are the centre, were "Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese," in Wine Office Court, and Messrs. Spiers and Pond's restaurant, at the back of Ludgate Hill Railway Station.

The first of these places, which is now the oldest and, I think, the only remaining representative of the ancient Fleet Street taverns, was one of the undoubted resorts of the great lexicographer, Dr. Johnson; for, although it is

not mentioned by Boswell, it must be remembered that while the biographer only knew Johnson after he and Goldsmith had left the immediate neighbourhood, the doctor lived for many years in Gough Square, just round the upper corner of Wine Office Court, while Goldsmith lodged in Wine Office Court itself, close to the "Cheese," and it was here he wrote *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Of course where Johnson was known to go all the rest of the *cognoscenti* were certain to find their way, and it must have been the charm attaching to the literary and social reputation of the old inn that in later times induced a succession of more or less eminent writers to frequent the house, Dickens, Thackeray, Prof. Wilson (Christopher North), Albert Smith, Tom Hood, Seymour Lucas, the eminent painter, and a host of other celebrated men being visitors at times to the famous hostelry.

Here, and at the other place of call already mentioned, have I frequently met the late Mr. George Augustus Sala, one of the ablest journalists of his day, commonly known by his friends as "Gas," from his three initials; Mr. Tom Hood, son of our famous poet and punster, the

younger Hood being editor of *Fun;* the late Mr. John Lovell, the clever manager of the Press Association and subsequent editor of the *Liverpool Mercury;* Mr. (now Dr.) Charles Russell, then editor of the *Sportsman*, and now occupying a similar position on the *Glasgow Herald*, the most widely-read and powerful journal in Scotland; Mr. Robert Williams, a well-known leader-writer employed on the *Daily Telegraph;* Mr. W. Brunton, one of the principal artists of *Fun*, whose inimitable sketches of London crowds gave a distinctive character to that comic publication; Mr. Byron Webber, the author of numerous books and poems; Mr. John Corlett, proprietor of the *Sporting Times*, whose vaticinations on turf events were eagerly read and acted upon by legions of racing men; Mr. Adams, a renowned Greek scholar; and Mr. Lawrence, who was formerly, in conjunction with his friend Adams, one of the classical tutors at Dulwich College; and a score or two of others whose names would unduly lengthen my list, but many of whom are still in the flesh and constant in their association with the friends yet remaining to them.

## ENGLISH SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

In closing these memoirs it may not be amiss to notice some of the changes and innovations that have taken place in our sports and pastimes within the period over which my journalistic recollections extend. Regarding Cricket as by far the most popular, if not the most important, of all our outdoor games, my memory takes me back to the time when I was first called upon to write brief descriptions of county and other matches. At that time there was a marked difference, not only as between the appearance of the players, but also as to the rules and methods by which the game was governed. The length between the wickets, the width of the bat, and the size, make and material of the ball, were the same as they are to-day; and although the rule as to wide balls has undergone no alteration, the umpire's fiat in declaring "no ball" was restricted to balls delivered with the bowler's hand higher than his shoulder, any deviation above that limit incurring the "no-ball" penalty.

I happened to be present at the Surrey Oval when the infliction of this penalty by Mr. John Lillywhite, a son of the

renowned cricketer of the same name, who was acting as umpire to one of the teams, brought about a revolution in the rule, which is now one of the laws of modern cricket, and has been the cause of a good deal of discussion and dissatisfaction in cricketing circles of late. The rule, as altered by the Marylebone Club, consequent on the contretemps arising out of this incident, demanded that the ball, although it might be delivered with the hand above the bowler's head, must be projected from a straight arm, and not jerked, or thrown, as boys throw stones.

The question which has occasioned so much difference of opinion among cricketers, and has in several cases led to certain bowlers being debarred from taking part in the game, is the knotty point as to whether a ball is really thrown, or properly bowled. But this was not the question in the Oval case to which I am referring. The player whose action was objected to was Wilsher, who was then considered one of the best bowlers in England. Watching his high delivery, together with some cricketing friends, comments were made by all of us on Wilsher's obvious breach of the

recognised rule, and one of our party several times expressed the opinion that he ought to be "no balled" by the umpire. At last when Wilsher was about to commence an over, Lillywhite was seen to approach him and make some remark. Whatever the umpire may have said made no difference to Wilsher's bowling, and when he had sent down the first ball of his over, Lillywhite called out, "No ball." The ball was not hit, and the moment it was returned to Wilsher he threw it down and walked away from the wicket, followed by the rest of his side. This unexpected action on the part of the team then in the field led to a long debate in the pavilion, which eventuated, strangely enough, in the withdrawal of Lillywhite from his umpireship, and the substitution of another man in his place, after which the game proceeded, Wilsher bowling as before. The occurrence being immediately afterwards brought under the attention of the Marylebone Club Committee, the question, after a good deal of discussion, was settled in the manner already stated.

Perhaps I should here refer to the influence which round-arm bowling, in

conjunction, doubtless, with the improvements that have everywhere taken place in the wickets (not always smooth as billiard tables as they now seem to be) has had upon the game. The introduction of the round-arm system took place in the year 1825, and up to that date the ball was delivered underhand, so that it always went straight to the opposite wicket, and wide-balls were things of very rare occurrence. But notwithstanding the admission of the new system, the underhand method was long persisted in by many old bowlers, and while it lasted had the effect of producing fewer drawn games than are now recorded, and on an average was responsible for much lighter scores than have followed the institution, first of the round-arm mode, and next of the permission to bowl from above the shoulder. An innings of more than three hundred runs was then regarded as a great feat, and although the bowling is now as a rule much faster than in former days, there were a few of the old underhand bowlers, notably Alfred Mynn, a tall, wide-shouldered, muscular athlete (whom I once saw at the Oval with two long stops kept in full employ-

ment), who could put an exceedingly rapid pace on the ball with apparently no more effort than is exacted by the high deliveries of the modern school. As a proof of the force with which the ball left the hand of many old bowlers, I was on one occasion chatting with the famous wicket-keeper, Tom Box, who showed me how, even before the round-hand system was much in vogue, some of his fingers had been so severely injured in stopping rapid balls that they were knocked partly out of shape.

In my early days it was unusual to see a team dressed in the smart flannels and natty caps which are the regular costume of the modern cricketer. Top hats and trousers, not necessarily of flannel, braced over the ordinary linen shirt, or an occasional jersey, were familiar to the vision of the old-time spectator, and very few batsmen appeared at the wickets with legs and hands guarded by substantial india-rubber pads.

During my time also the six-ball over was changed to one of only four balls, but owing to the waste of time caused by the constant changing of the field as a consequence of this system, the better

and more satisfactory plan of lengthening the bowling intervals has been reverted to, and in all probability, although the drawn games of the present day average upwards of sixty per cent., the record of unfinished matches would be even higher than it is but for the return to a more rational method.

There is another point which of late has engaged a good deal of attention in the cricket world, and that is the continuation of the element of chance as to which side shall commence a game. The invariable practice is, and always has been, to decide by the tossing of a coin which team shall have the right to begin the batting. The losers of the toss must go in on a bad wicket when the ground has been moistened by rain, or in fine weather must wait until their adversaries have put a considerable amount of rough wear on the batting points, with the chance that the same ill-luck may recur at the return match. An alternative system is being advocated in some quarters, and there is doubtless much to be said in its favour, as cricket after all is a game of skill, and as little as possible beyond what is inevitable ought to be left to chance.

There is, in addition to cricket, another outdoor game which of late years has been taking an increasing hold on the English public—I allude to golf. It has from time immemorial been a popular form of competitive recreation in the country lying beyond the Tweed, where, by the way, it is esteemed much beyond our premier national game. But now that it has become a favourite pastime in England, largely to the detriment of racquets and tennis, it has assumed so much importance that not only are golf links to be found in every seaside resort and in the neighbourhood of all our large towns, but, besides creating a profitable industry in the manufacture of golf clubs and other appliances necessary to the game, it has throughout our long summer season become an indispensable item of journalistic news, every paper in the kingdom devoting some part of its available space to recording matches of interest to the votaries of the game.

Polo has also of recent years become a craze, and, like the outdoor amusements already dealt with, furnishes constant items of readable news to the lovers of the game. Unlike cricket, tennis, and many other forms of alfresco recreation,

polo is an expensive amusement, and is only indulged by those who can afford to purchase specially-trained ponies, most of which are costly animals. It is a wholesome and exciting pastime, but resembles most equestrian exercises in so far as it involves the players in a certain amount of danger, consequent on the numerous slips and collisions that take place in the turns and evolutions of the game. But in connection with this amusement a highly sensational and much more dangerous element has lately been developed by the prosecution of the game, in the neighbourhood of New York, on automotors, instead of the four-legged animal. Whether this risky and somewhat inelegant variation of an otherwise picturesque recreation has come, as the Americans say, to stay, is a question for future determination; but in a country which produces Alpine climbers by the hundred, swimming record breakers by the score, and numberless people willing at all times to undertake the most foolhardy feats, it would not be a matter of surprise if motor-polo becomes a permanent institution.

Other methods of open-air amusement, including croquet, lawn tennis, push-ball

(which has recently become both a bipedal and also a quadrupedal game), the hazardous American form of our less risky old English "rounders," and several other modes of healthy relaxation, have either sprung into existence, or been extensively popularised during the period over which these memoirs range.

Among the indoor games, which are mainly due to the desire for novelty that has grown up within the last half-century or so, it is only necessary to mention the harmless and withal unexciting amusement afforded by parlour tennis under the name of "ping-pong," carpet golf, and croquet, and a variety of minor recreations, the idea of which has been borrowed from the common forms of open-air pastimes. Even in cards the craving for something new has been gratified by the introduction of the enthralling game of Bridge, and the insidious forms of gambling developed through indulgence in such methods of pastime as are afforded by Napoleon, Poker, and a number of substitutes for Loo, Faro, and other games over which millions of money have been lost and won by reckless gamesters and callous card-sharpers.

## CONCLUSION.

In closing these miscellaneous recollections I may be allowed to take a brief glance backwards over the long vista of events that have so largely contributed to the improved conditions of modern life in which the present generation rejoices. These improvements affect almost every phase of civilised existence, and have brought with them countless blessings altogether unknown to our forefathers, of whose loss in these respects the more youthful members of our body politic lack the full appreciation, because they have been born into modern ways, and have no means of realising the numerous inconveniences attaching to the period in which their grandsires and more remote ancestors flourished. Among the manifold benefits of later times it will suffice to mention but a few, and these include the immense strides that have been made in popular education, in which modern journalism has been no mean factor, the general adoption of efficient sanitary laws, the numerous and important applications of electricity to telegraphic purposes and public and private lighting, the partial replacement of steam

by electric power in ordinary machinery and locomotion, the revolution which has taken place and is still progressing in our naval and military means of defence, the multitudinous discoveries that have been made in science, surgery and medicine, the colonisation and civilisation of huge continents but recently subject to the sway of savage and blood-thirsty rulers, and the general advance of European and colonial populations in physical training and moral perceptibilities. Should the next threescore years be productive of anything like the same ratio of progress, it is difficult even to conceive what the world will then have become; but that further advancement will be achieved is as certain as that the globe is still continuing its revolutions round the sun.

# APPENDIX.

IT may be of interest to my readers if I add to what I have written above, a few of the recollections jotted down by an elder brother of mine who occupied a position on the London Press some years before I turned my back upon the provinces.

He begins by saying—all this having been written many years ago, as will be seen by the names of those then living, but who have since gone over to the majority :—

When I first entered the Reporters' Gallery the Earl of Aberdeen was Prime Minister, with Lord Clarendon as Foreign Secretary, Lord Cranworth as Lord Chancellor, and Lord Canning, the Marquess of Lansdowne, the Duke of Argyll, and the Duke of Newcastle as his colleagues. The late Lord Derby led the Opposition in the House of Peers, supported by Lord Malmesbury, Lord St. Leonards, Lord Ellenborough, and

the Marquess of Salisbury (father of the late Prime Minister). Among the independent peers were Earl Grey, Lord Brougham, Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Campbell, the Earl of Dundonald, the famous admiral, better known as Lord Cochrane, the Earl of Carlisle, Earl Cowley, Lord Panmure (afterwards Earl of Dalhousie), Lord Hardinge, and Lord Raglan.

In the Commons Lord John Russell was leader of the House, with Lord Palmerston as his first lieutenant, and Mr. Gladstone, Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, Sir E. (afterwards Lord) Cardwell, Sir Charles Wood (afterwards Lord Halifax), and Sir George Grey as his assistant Ministers. The Opposition was led by Mr. Disraeli (who was then acting in conjunction with Mr. Spencer Walpole), Mr. Henley, Sir J. Pakington (afterwards Lord Hampton), Sir F. Thesiger (afterwards Lord Chelmsford), Sir Fitzroy Kelly, Colonel Peel, and Sir E. Bulwer Lytton (afterwards Lord Lytton). I can only call to mind six prominent members of the present Parliament who then had seats in the House, namely Mr. Gladstone, Lord John Manners (who has succeeded to the title of Duke of Rutland), Mr. C. P.

Villiers, Sir Charles Forster, and Mr. John Bright. Among those who have vanished from the scene, I may mention Mr. Cobden, Sir Charles Napier, Mr. Roebuck, Mr. Spooner, Mr. Newdegate, Mr. Bernal Osborne, Sir J. Bowring, Mr. H. Berkeley (of Ballot Bill fame), Mr. Horsman, Sir F. Baring (Lord Northbrook), Mr. H. Drummond, Mr. Tom Duncombe, Mr. E. Miall, Lord Mahon (afterwards Earl Stanhope), Colonel Sibthorpe, Baron Lionel de Rothschild, Mr. Beresford Hope, Mr. Milner Gibson, Sir de Lacy Evans, Sir Benjamin Hall (Lord Llanover), who gave the name of "Big Ben" to the large bell in the Westminster clock tower, Mr. Feargus O'Connor, Mr. Richard Monckton Milne (afterwards Lord Houghton), Sir Alexander Cockburn, Sir Richard Bethell, Sir William Molesworth, Mr. George Hudson (the "Railway King"), Mr. Robert Stephenson (the eminent engineer), Sir M. Trollope, Lord R. Grosvenor (whose Bill for closing the metropolitan public-houses on Sundays led to the first great gatherings in Trafalgar Square and to riots in Hyde Park), Mr. Stuart Wortley, Mr. Forbes Mackenzie (whose Sunday Closing Bill for Scotland met with a better fate than that of Lord

Robert Grosvenor's, and is still the law of the northern kingdom), Mr. John Sadlier (a Lord of the Treasury, who, dreading the consequences of certain practices in connection with the Tipperary Bank, committed suicide on Hampstead Heath), and three of the O'Connells, sons of the "Liberator."

Most of the eminent statesmen and public men of that day had changed their political opinions. Lord Aberdeen, the head of a Liberal Coalition Government, was a Tory in the palmy days of Protection; Lord Derby, the leader of the Conservatives, had once been a Whig Irish Secretary; Lord Palmerston, Mr. Cardwell, Mr. Sidney Herbert (Lord Herbert of Lea), Mr. Milner Gibson, Sir James Graham, the Duke of Newcastle, and Mr. Gladstone had all sat in the Commons as Conservatives; while, on the other hand, Mr. Disraeli and Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton had commenced their political career as something like Radicals. The only three public men of eminence who have been uniformly consistent in their party adherence were Lord John Russell, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Bright, although the first speech delivered in the House of Commons by Lord John Russell

was one in opposition to parliamentary reform.

Mr. Brotherton, for many years member for Salford, was popularly known as the "night-cap" of the House, owing to the fact that at the commencement of every session he was in the nightly habit of moving that the labours of "Her Majesty's faithful Commons" should be suspended at twelve o'clock. The object of one of the new rules just passed is to close the debates of the House at twelve, and to terminate its business entirely at half-past twelve, so that Mr. Smith, to whom we are indebted for the change, is fairly entitled to inherit the name earned for himself by Mr. Brotherton. I should here state that in former days "obstuction" of the kind now understood had not been dreamt of; no member was allowed to put a question to ministers without reading it from the paper. What would be said if such a course were pursued now, when the number of questions on the paper every night is frequently from sixty to eighty and sometimes over a hundred, while numerous others of which private notice, or even no notice at all, has been given are also put. Lord Palmerston persistently refused to answer any question

until he saw it in print, and of him it may be said that he was without a rival in the art of baffling the inquisitiveness of hon. members. There was such an air of frankness and candour in the way in which he answered the most awkward queries, that hon. members who had put them, used to think they had got all they wanted and bowed their acknowledgements. It was only when they saw and began to analyse the replies after they were in print that they discovered that they were just about as wise as they had been before the questions were put.

Lord Palmerston was always very kind and genial in his treatment of reporters. In the later days of his life I attended a good many of his meetngs at Romsey, Southampton, and Tiverton. He was always accompanied by a footman in livery, who at public dinners filled his lordship's decanter with toast and water, and, carefully removing the bread supplied at the banquet, replaced it with a piece specially prepared, which he produced from a wrapper concealed in the capacious pocket of his overcoat. This footman was quite a character in his way. He went with Lord Palmerston everywhere, and so identified himself

with the distinguished nobleman, that he invariably used the editorial "we." I remember on one occasion when Lord Palmerston was much badgered on the Tiverton hustings by Rowcroft, the Radical butcher, a local politician who used to do what the Scottish people term the "heckling," the footman, turning to me, said in tones of deep disgust, "Weally, I 'm astonished that we put up with this sort of thing! We wouldn't stand it a moment, only they 're our constituents, you know."

I remember on another occasion attending, by special invitation from Lord Palmerston, a meeting of Hampshire landowners to consider the question of providing better accommodation for the agricultural labourers. It was held in a sort of barn close to Romsey Abbey. When I reached the building an attendant outside refused to admit me on the ground that I was not a county landowner. I scrawled a few words on the back of my card, and sent them to Lord Palmerston, who at once directed that I should be admitted. The scene was very amusing. There was neither chair nor table in the room, but a seat had been improvised for Lord Palmerston by placing two boards

across some wooden tubs. I had to stand and hold my book in my hand while taking notes of the proceedings. The speech then made by his lordship was a very important one, and I was the only reporter present. Nowadays, not only would every metropolitan journal be represented on such an occasion, but through the great news agencies that have been since established, the whole of the principal journals in the provinces would be supplied by telegraph with the proceedings.

I further remember going down to Romsey to be present at a presentation of colours to the local volunteers. It was a bitterly cold day, and there were six inches of snow upon the ground. Nevertheless, Lord and Lady Palmerston were present, together with Sir William Heathcote, one of the members for the county, and the present Lord Mount Temple, son of Lady Palmerston by her first husband, Earl Cowper. Colonel Barker Mill, colonel of the volunteer regiment, and Lady Mill were also there, and Lady Mill presented the colours and read a short written address. Colonel Mill then called for three cheers for Lord Palmerston, which were lustily given,

and to my dismay I saw the volunteers beginning to file off. I immediately called Lord Palmerston's attention to the fact, and told him I had come down specially to report what he had to say. "Oh, yes, I see," said his lordship, and, going up to Colonel Mill, he whispered something in that gentleman's ear. In another moment the order was given for the recall of the volunteers. Wheeling round, they returned to their original position, again surrounding the temporary platform. Lord Palmerston then made an admirable little speech of half an hour's duration upon the volunteer movement, a speech that would certainly never have been delivered but for the action I had felt compelled to take. I recollect also that at the close of that speech Lord Palmerston leant over the platform and said to me in a sort of stage whisper, "I hope that will do." A local reporter, who did not appear to have understood what had taken place, wound up his report of the speech with these words: "'I hope,' said his lordship, in conclusion, 'that will do.'"

Lord John Russell was the very antipodes of Lord Palmerston in regard to

his treatment of newspaper men. He always seemed to make himself as uncivil and unpleasant as possible. I remember once hearing him from a public platform saying to a reporter from *The Times*, to whom he had just refused the loan of a document he had quoted, "I shall feel obleeged,"—he always said "obleeged," possibly as a result of his Scotch education,—"if you would send me a copy of *The Times* to Chesham Place. I never see it, I take the *Daily News*." Mr. Disraeli, on the other hand, was very accommodating to those who represented the Press. He even went the length of conferring a pension upon a gentleman, Mr. Neilson, who was formerly leader of *The Times* corps in the Reporters' Gallery, for "diligent parliamentary reporting." The proprietors of *The Times*, however, objected to the pension being taken, and themselves bestowed upon Mr. Neilson, and continued to pay until the day of his death, the pension he would otherwise have received from the Government. Sir George Cornewall Lewis was also very popular among Press men, owing to his invariable urbanity and willingness to oblige. He was the only man I ever heard who succeeded by a speech in

influencing, and in fact completely changing, the character of a vote, the result of which, like that of most other political decisions, was apparently a foregone conclusion. As this is so rare a phenomenon in the history of party doings, I will briefly narrate the manner in which it was brought about. In former years Wednesday sittings were exclusively appropriated to the consideration of private members' Bills. One Wednesday the first business on the paper was the order for the second reading of a Bill brought in by Mr. McMahon, the then member for Wexford and a former occupant of the Reporters' Gallery. This Bill proposed to give an appeal in criminal cases. At this time the Liberals were in power, but they had suffered two or three defeats, and this was considered a favourable occasion for bringing the Conservatives down to the House in considerable force with a view of supporting Mr. McMahon's Bill and thus inflicting on the Liberal Government the annoyance of another defeat. Sir George Cornewall Lewis, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, although not much of an orator, was a very long-headed, shrewd and practical debater,

and in a speech which lasted about three quarters of an hour he so utterly demolished the arguments of those who had spoken in support of the Bill, that one by one the Conservative members quitted the House, and in the end even Mr. McMahon declined to press the question to a division.

I am here reminded of a little anecdote connected with Sir George Cornewall Lewis' career which is worth the telling. Somewhere about the year 1858 he presided at an agricultural dinner, which took place at Knighton, in Radnorshire. A friend of mine, whose name I will not give inasmuch as he is still living, went down to report the proceedings for *The Times*. He found that the dinner, which was held in a small room in a country-public house, partook very much of the character of an ordinary. There were not more than thirty persons present, mostly farmers. Next to Sir George sat Sir John Walsh, afterwards Lord Ormathwaite, who then represented the county of Radnor. My friend sent up his card with a request that Sir George would make his principal speech early, in order that advantage might be taken of a particular train. Sir George

rubbed his eyes, stared at the card, and then sent a waiter to ask the reporter to take wine with him. Soon after this another waiter brought a message to the reporter to the effect that Sir George Lewis wished to speak to him. My friend accordingly waited on Sir George, who said he was astounded to find that *The Times* had sent to a meeting of that kind. "Why," he said, "this is a simple agricultural gathering, at which all political allusions are strictly excluded." "Never mind," said my friend, "whatever you do say will appear in *The Times*."

The Liberals were in opposition at that time, and, knowing that his tongue was not fettered by political responsibility, Sir George made a speech of about an hour's duration, in which he recommended, as the Liberal programme for the next Parliament, a revision of the Reform Act of 1832. This speech was delivered at the commencement of the recess. John Bright almost immediately followed it up with a powerful oration at Bradford, and scarcely a political meeting was held during that autumn and winter at which the subject of parliamentary reform was not the principal theme.

The agitation thus commenced was only terminated by the passing of the Reform Bill introduced by Mr. Disraeli in 1867.

I also recollect how on one occasion, when Sir Hardinge Giffard, then the newly-elected member for a Cornish borough, hardly known to the public except as a rising lawyer, but since then Lord Chancellor during Conservative and Unionist Administrations, presented himself at the clerk's table in the House of Commons for the purpose of taking the oath, and occasioned a good deal of amusement by rummaging all his pockets, only to discover that he had left behind him the only document which was necessary to enable him to take his seat—the returning officer's writ, the pile of papers he produced and deposited in front of him affording abundant testimony to the ingenuity of the tailor who had created so many receptacles in the ordinary garments of a single individual. I remember also how Admiral Sir Charles Napier impeached the conduct of Sir James Graham in reference to the Baltic expedition, and concluded with a motion that would have fallen to the ground for want of a seconder if Admiral Walcott, a political opponent,

had not sprung to his feet with the rather unparliamentary ejaculation, "D—— my eyes—I beg pardon, Mr. Speaker—if I can ever see a brother tar adrift without throwing him a tow-line; I will, therefore, second the motion."

And I remember, further, how Mr. Disraeli, at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, in announcing as the forthcoming policy of the Conservative party a serious endeavour to legislate in the direction of sanitary reform, emphasising his remarks by the Latin phrase, "*Sanitas, sanitatum, omnia sanitas*," spoke for upwards of three hours, his speech filling nine columns in the Manchester papers of the following morning, although he had previously dictated to a *Times* reporter as the speech he had prepared less than half that quantity, which was all that appeared in that journal.

I may also state, in relation to the occasional oratorical eccentricities of the "Grand Old Man," as he was commonly called—Mr. Gladstone—that my son, who has accompanied him in one or two of his political campaigns, says, "The right hon. gentleman will make a speech on the smallest provocation

and under the most disadvantageous circumstances. Once in the wild valley of Glencree I heard him speak, bare-headed and in the rain, to a lot of reformatory boys in response to the appeal of his wife, 'Do say a few words to them, William,' and I also heard him harangue a number of noisy students in the grounds of Trinity College, Dublin, because some of them kept shouting, 'A speech, a speech'; while in the House of Commons, in answer to a very commonplace sneer from Mr. Chaplin, he actually delivered a caustic speech which would have filled at least a column of *The Times* minion — the ordinary reporting type of that paper."

Like Sir George Lewis, Mr. Sidney Herbert, afterwards Lord Herbert of Lea, was very affable to newspaper men. He was exceedingly eloquent, very handsome, being far above the common height, with finely-chiselled features, an olive tinged complexion and a melodious voice. He was, however, never robust, and the wear and tear of official responsibilities during the trying period of the Crimean War doubtless had the effect of shortening his life. He was very

popular in the county in which he lived —Wiltshire.

I remember attending a meeting in connection with the opening of a Mechanics Institute at Warminster. The present Marquess of Bath was in the chair, and Mr. Sidney Herbert was down on the programme for one of the late resolutions. The distance from London was considerable and the trains not very frequent. I was therefore anxious, if possible, to bring about a change in the arrangements in order to ensure my return to London that night. Writing a hurried note to the right hon. gentleman, I handed it to Lord Bath, who passed it on. Soon afterwards I had a few pencilled lines from Mr. Sidney Herbert asking me to go round the platform and see him. On my doing so he told me he had not proposed to make a speech at all, that he had only attended the meeting out of compliment to his neighbour Lord Bath, and that he simply intended to move a vote of thanks. "However," he added, "I 'll see what I can do." The result was that he spoke early, making the principal subject of his speech the influence which newspaper literature was exercising upon the education

of the people and the destinies of the country. At that time the paper duty had not long disappeared, and newspapers were springing up like mushrooms in every town of the kingdom. The speech was very eloquent, but one part of it gave rise to considerable controversy—a passage in which Mr. Sidney Herbert recommended the adoption of the French system, whereby the names of the writers should be appended to all newspaper leading articles. Mr. Sidney Herbert's remarks were given in almost every newspaper in the kingdom, and were translated into French in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, besides being copiously quoted in numerous French journals The right hon. gentleman was complimented by his French critics, but mercilessly criticised by the majority of the English newspapers.

When Lord Cross was in the House of Commons he generally sat next to Mr. W. H. Smith, afterwards First Lord of the Treasury, and of the two Lord Randolph Churchill, when leading what was termed the "Fourth Party," once spoke as "Marshall and Snelgrove." A year or two ago some hon. member repeated this phrase in the House. It

so happened that at the moment Lord Randolph was seated between Mr. Smith and Mr. Cross, and I saw both appeal to him, doubtless to know what the reference to "Marshall and Snelgrove" meant. Lord Randolph positively blushed—the only time, as far as I am aware, he was ever guilty of such an indiscretion. I am, of course, unable to say what answer the noble lord returned, but the House was convulsed with laughter.

This scene recalls to me an incident that occurred some years before, when Mr. Bright alluded to Mr. Lowe and Mr. Horsman as resembling those Biblical personages who took refuge in the Cave of Adullam—adding that they constituted a party of two, and reminded him of a peculiar kind of terrier, so completely covered with hair, that it was difficult to distinguish the head from the tail. I afterwards heard Mr. Lowe refer to this circumstance very humorously at a meeting in the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution. He was speaking of the ignorance of the ordinary Member of Parliament in regard to Biblical literature and modern languages. As to the latter, he said he was once travelling on the Continent,

in company with a peer and a member of the House of Commons, and neither of the three was able to make himself intelligible to an ordinary French waiter. He went on to say that the sort of knowledge of the Bible possessed by an average Member of Parliament was about on a par with his French, and here he instanced Mr. Bright's reference to the Cave of Adullam, remarking that a number of hon. members had asked him to explain that allusion. He added, "It was somewhat hard that I should have been the person called upon to point the barb aimed at my own breast."

I remember an amusing story in connection with the report of Mr. Bright's speech as it appeared in one of the London papers. The Adullam allusion was given in a somewhat hazy manner, and the manager of the paper referred to asked a veteran reporter connected with the establishment whether he thought the gentleman who had written that part of the speech understood Mr. Bright's reference. "Certainly," was the reply. "There is no man on the staff so ignorant that he has not read the *Arabian Nights*." Mr. Whitty, of the *Liverpool Daily Post*,

who was also fogged by the quotation, actually sent a note to the editor of the *Mercury* asking for the loan of a Delphin edition of *Virgil*, saying he had been all through *Horace*, and could find no reference to the Cave of Adullam.

THE END.

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